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Narratives of Zimbabwean children and parents: Language Brokering in Johannesburg.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Patterns of migration between Zimbabwe and South Africa have a long history and the trend shows that, in recent decades, movement has been in both directions. Research shows that migrating to Zimbabwe was at one point a desired option as it offered better options to South Africans during Apartheid (Tevera & Zinyama, 2002). This, however has drastically changed as post-2000 deteriorating economic and political challenges in Zimbabwe (Tafira, 2011) forced Zimbabweans to start migrating more to South Africa than before. Of particular note is the fact that families, rather than individuals are being 'uprooted' in the migration process (Crush & Towodzera, 2013). The continual deteriorating economic situation in Zimbabwe, coupled with the political one, has resulted in the dire refuge of Zimbabweans and other Africans seeking asylum in the host nation, South Africa. The South African government has responded to this by a change of policy, to a policy allowing easier stay in South Africa to remittances through the dispensation of permits in September 2010 (Hammerstad, 2011). The implication of this was not only additional years of stay for Zimbabwean immigrants but also the further dispensation of free permits that allowed immigrants to work and stay legally.

By September 2011, in total, 134 369 permits had been dispensed out of the total applications of 275 762 received by the Department of Home Affairs (Hammerstad, 2011). One of the effects of this dispensation was that immigrants, who had left their children at home, subsequent to securing employment, were able to relocate their children to South Africa for a better life and education. These figures exclude the greater majority of the 300 000 asylum seekers who had logged applications by 2011 (Hammerstad, 2011) and non-permanent dispensation permits (like study, work, special skills and medical permits) and

undocumented Zimbabweans entering South Africa. In summation, the figures of Zimbabweans raising and staying with their families in South Africa have increased drastically. It is deplorable that very little research has gone into the development, identity and feelings of these children, existing in a context where there is continual repetition of violence against immigrants. Though research is still on-going into the causes, immigrants are attacked in social, private and public places and some of these xenophobic attacks, violent or subtle are, premised or rationalised by a focus on language. In 2008 and most recently, in 2015, immigrants were violently attacked in South Africa (Tlou, 2015). In many of these attacks, language played a distinct role in identifying immigrants there by singling them out as the ones to whom the attacks were steered. Together with their "physical features, their bearing, their clothing styles, their inability to speak indigenous languages make them clearly distinct to local citizens who easily pick them out and scapegoat them" (Morris, 2008, p. 1125).

Black African immigrants in South Africa may have no visible skin colour or socioeconomic status that differentiates them from local citizens; "in many cases, they share ancestries, traditions and languages. This means that members of one group, notably members of the establishment of citizenry engage in narcissism of minor differences to blame and stigmatize members of the other groups particularly members of weaker groups" (Matsinhe, 2011, p. 297).Specifically, in South Africa, it is apparent that the target of these attacks are mainly black immigrants who are often referred to with derogatory names like *makwerekwere*, carrying connotations that the sound of their foreign languages are strange, not 'proper' language, and by implication, likening these people to animals or non-humans through the sounds of their unfamiliar languages.

Contrary to this, other immigrants, in particular those from the Americas and Europe go unnoticed, often being tagged as tourists and even better, referred to as "expats"

(Tshabalala, 2015, p. 2). In townships where these attacks were predominant both in 2008 and 2015, the presence of white people has been welcome and they viewed either as tourists or businesses people, both, which are welcome in comparison to the black counterparts whose businesses are either looted, beaten up or both (Tshabalala, 2015). It becomes poignant therefore, that xenophobia is mainly based on two main elements which; language and race.

1.2 Rationale of Study

Currently, immigrants are again facing subtle and overt xenophobic attacks in South Africa and this does not only affect adults but also children in South African schools. Research has highlighted that local learners keep their distance from their English-speaking peers, an immediate discriminatory factor to most immigrant students who enter the South African school system as English speakers. Discrimination and isolation based on language seems to increase proportionately to proficiency in English (Osman, 2009). In this regard, the more fluent and dependant on the English language a child is, the more prone they are to being discriminated against, bullied, or worse, dehumanized ("viewed as lesser humans not deserving of moral consideration" (Maiese, 2003, p. 1). Language therefore, is implicated in attitudes of prejudice and xenophobia. Language is not only a vehicle to transfer information, but also features importantly in identity and therefore often serves to 'other' people of different groups. Historically, in South Africa, language has been an important element that some researchers including Yuval-Davis, (2011) state as marking the distinction between 'we' and 'they' or between 'us' and 'them'. Language is the most salient symbol of ethnicity because it carries the past and expresses present and future attitudes and aspirations (Kamwangamalu, 2003)

The history of South Africa is imperative when looking at language in this context. Despite the official role of Afrikaans under Apartheid, English is the dominant language, and carries a history of racial arrogance and prejudice (Achebe, 2006). This notion is supported

by Malan and Walker (1991), who state that English is associated with imperialism. In this context, the introduction of additional indigenous African languages by (immigrants) speaking a language that is not theirs, they (locals) might view it as an element that one perceives themselves as either superior or contaminating their efforts to preserve their own language, South Africans in such situations might be resisting 'language genocide' (Malan & Walker, 1991). The South African communities are well aware of the economic strength the English language carries, and this has serious perceived effects on isiZulu and other African languages (Rudwick, 2008).

Zimbabwean migrants who arrive in South Africa are mostly bilingual, usually speaking either Shona or Ndebele with English. They arrive in Johannesburg where languages are already mixed as a lot of the population, including South Africans, are migrants to this city, travelling from rural places, elsewhere on the continent, for the purpose of seeking work and opportunities. The role of language is salient in xenophobic attitudes with many South Africans refusing to speak English (even if they can) and choosing to speak their local languages to Zimbabweans. Although this is not unique to Zimbabweans in the context of Johannesburg, in the case of migrants who cannot speak English (e.g. those form Francophone Africa) the difficulties of communication may be more readily reduced to language. In the case of Zimbabweans, the refusal to speak the lingua franca of English is clearly about more than just language. This might not be a problem for Ndebele speakers who can speak Nguni languages (Skhosana, 2010) but for Shona speakers, this presents a communication barrier as very few understand any local vernacular languages, hence the need for language brokering as some children mediate and intervene to translate for their parents and family members alike. Shona speakers use English as the main language of communication in South Africa, in contexts where English is resisted by some black South Africans; necessitating a language broker to translate and even mediate in such spaces. This

makes it imperative to study the plight of immigrant children who are active agents in the context in which they exist as they continue to be invisible in immigrant studies, with their actions and perceptions less explored (Orellana, 2009).

Although English is viewed as possessing economic power in South Africa, in many places, especially townships, those who adopt English as the main medium of communication are perceived as outsiders to the community (Rudwick, 2008). Use of English comes with the risk that one maybe labelled as a "coconut" or "oreo" (Rudwick, 2008, p. 102). This applies to existing members of the South African society who are labelled as the above or discriminated against based on their eloquence in English and/or the perceived attachment they have to 'whiteness'. One can imagine that the risk may be extreme or more intense for an immigrant in such a context. With the perceived threat, the English language is seen to have impact on languages like isiZulu discussed above. The resistance is almost unavoidable as shown by some xenophobic attacks, and this gives isiZulu a dynamic of power in the process of identifying people who belong and those who do not belong. This process serves to exclude through its power to promote difference (Davis, 2004). IsiZulu is frequently used by South African police when trying to identify undocumented immigrants or foreigners in general. Some of these instances prompt or require children to translate for their parents, with children doing more than interpreting and translating but also mediating in conflicts between their parents and other people, including brokering for their relatives in situations where the police are involved (Orellana, 2001).

1.3 Background

Language brokers can be defined as "children of immigrant families who translate and interpret for their parents and other individuals" (Morales & Hanson, 2005, p. 471). Although immigrant children have been brokers for a long time, the phenomenon has only recently been considered important for empirical study (Morales & Hanson, 2005). This phenomenon is reflected especially in the youths who settle in new migration destinations having relocated with their family (Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, & Little, 2014).

In South Africa specifically, the need, use and evident examples of language brokering is a daily reality for foreigners; as the police track them daily to inspect their passports and consider them for imprisonment and subsequent deportation if they do have passports or legal documentation at that present moment. Language is also used by police in these random stops in order to identify who is a foreigner and who is native. This assertion was highlighted by the story of Dr Nyawira Nene, a lecturer at the University of Witwatersrand who was threatened with handcuffs and was harassed, while in his pyjamas for not having his passport with him at a raid in his Braamfontein residence (Karibu, 2009). After being approached by a policeman in Zulu and emphasising that he did not understand the language, the policeman assumed that he was Zimbabwean and, based on this alone, he threatened him like a criminal without even presenting him with a warrant (Karibu, 2009). The use of language as a way to identify 'foreigners' rather than the legitimate checking of documents has led to a large number of legally documented migrants being arrested and detained, with some of these people having just failed to have made a response in Zulu and some like Valji states, "just for being too dark" (Valji, 2013, p. 5).

Recognising the positioning of immigrant children in the South African context, the current study focuses on language brokering by Zimbabwean immigrant children and

adolescents. Not only are these children and the quality of their lives in the South African context generally invisible in immigration research, the specific role of language brokering has not been explored in the South African context. Immigrant children assimilate into the host culture and language faster than their parents do. They interact more in play and at school in multiple local languages unlike their parents who usually use the language of the economy (English) at work and have little or no interaction in local vernacular languages. However, not much research has attended to this or its effect in a context as violent to immigrants as South Africa. Among the reasons for the neglect of this research, Drennan (1999) states that in the sphere of healthcare, there is an absence of a common language between doctors and patients, and this implies therefore that the use of interpreters might be so much a part of everyday life to the extent of making it invisible (Drennan, 1999).

1.4 Objectives of study

South Africa, and particularly Johannesburg, is a key African migrations destination and the neglect of language brokering research has to be addressed, especially with reference to immigrant children. Looking at children and adolescents and their experiences as language brokers, reflects on them as actors and active agents rather than passive beings. In this, we may see aspects of immigrant experience that are invisible in adult focused studies (Orellana, 2001).

To address the topic, this research attempts to determine, not only the context in which migrant children are involved in language brokering but also the effects this has on them and on parent-child relationships; the roles that might be reversed and the identity with

which these children identify themselves. With the above coming together, questions start to rise and these include:

1. In which spaces or spheres is language brokering occurring?

2. What are the experiences of children as brokers?

3. What may these experiences tell us about migrant families, xenophobia, and the role of language?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Contextualizing language brokering

As I prepare to write up my dissertation, the news has alerted me with news of a Maskandi artist who, in South Africa has been taken to court for xenophobic lyrics. The song *Abahambe Osbari* [Foreigners must go!] (Langa, 2015) represents migrants as unwanted criminals in South Africa, who make a livelihood from pirating music among other crimes. In his defence, the artist claims he is merely expressing the views of the people on the ground in his resort to derogatory language to suggest that foreigners are criminals and a nuisance (eNCA, 2015). The mobilization of stereotypes in South Africa fuels discrimination and prejudice against foreigners, in some cases leading to xenophobic attacks such as experienced at the beginning of 2015, or other subtle but daily experiences of prejudice and discrimination against immigrants and their families. These situations promote not only a fear of being identified as a foreigner but also a sense that security can only be attained by concealing one's identity through acquiring multilingual skills and attempting to blend in.

In the context of South Africa, the history and progression of language is intertwined so much with race and class. These multi-layered intersections form the complex society of current South Africa, immersed in racial, tribal and xenophobic conflicts embodied in language. These intersections are in some cases the cause of conflicts like xenophobic attacks. Alexander (2011, p. 1) affirms that, "South Africa is a place in which "race" has been an ideological prism through which people perceive their reality, this insight has tended to be ignored by intellectuals in the Social sciences although there were moments in history when the language issue specifically erupted with volcanic menace to remind the world that this country cannot be viewed in simple black-or-white terms".

Although Alexander wrote with specific mention to Afrikaans, the language issue continues to lead South Africa to racially influenced and complex moments that can no longer be ignored. In light of the above, it is imperative to note that language and its multi facets has in recent years still been an 'ideological prism' through which reality is perceived also in line with Alexander (2011). This has been confirmed by attacks on migrants mainly those who are black from African countries, mostly by black citizens of South Africa. In this regard, language has functioned not only to identify non-citizens but also in many ways also functions to tag them with undesired traits like being criminals. This is an example of a perception of reality which, like Alexander (2011) states, builds up to the 'eruption of a violent moment' expressed in xenophobic attacks on those without the ability to speak local languages.

These racial tensions and attacks are fuelled by another perception encapsulated in the English language. The power of English and its history has been closely linked to class in South Africa (Alexander, 2011) and elsewhere in Africa (Achebe, 2006). Wa Thing'o (1986) writing from a Kenyan perspective echoes these sentiments as he writes about the dominance of English which in past years was related to reward, prestige and "determined literary education while reinforcing this dominance" (p. 287). English has not only been related to dominance in these contexts but also, the more English one speaks, the more they seem to be perceived to be of a higher class. According to Alexander (2004), Afrikaans has left a clear racist legacy in South Africa that leads to resistance, however; similar resistance to English as a colonial language was not always as clearly articulated, partly because it was juxtaposed with Apartheid language policies that privileged Afrikaans. However, more recently, the racialized politics of South Africa has increased resistance to English, particularly when spoken by the new black elite.

Survival in this complex and multi-faceted context for immigrants means an obvious adaption to the context and the use of linguistic skills where they are available. This has, in some families, necessitated brokering on the part of the child, to protect themselves and family members from racial attacks based on language. These elements are unique to the South African linguistic contexts, the focus of this research project.

Through the world, a specific focus on children as language brokers in migrant communities only started in the mid-90s (Morales & Hanson, 2005). The focus of these studies is mainly on the effects of child language brokering on family relationship and identities, which will also form the focus of this study. Most literature available is not in the African context. English, is spoken throughout most of South Africa, and therefore, there would ostensibly be less need there to translate and for children to broker in English.

However, although English is the lingua franca for South Africa, this is juxtaposed with the politics of language in the multilingual South African context. English holds this position with an increasing awareness of the "necessity to revalorize or replace the indigenous languages and a strong tendency to select the colonial language, English as the lingua franca" (Kamwangamalu, 2000, p. 137). Not only does the English language carry a history of racial arrogance and prejudice as highlighted by Chinua Achebe (2006), also it is perceived as the 'killer language' responsible for "language genocide" (Kamwangamalu, 2000) of local languages).

The available literature portrays language brokering as very much a controversial issue, debated across most facets of developmental studies with special reference to children, starting from a linguistic focused study and now gaining entrance into the social sciences (Slavova & Phoenx, 2011). The controversial topic and debate has over the years stretched from linguistic and social structures to political spheres. This study focuses on the effects

language brokering has for the children practicing it, in terms of social, emotional experiences, effects on relationship with parents and the spaces where brokering exists.

2.2 Politics of Language

Humans are naturally dependant on language; this not only facilitates communication but also a marker of social status and affiliation. “Dialects and accents (or lack of) have a bearing and close ties with prejudice and these have an effect on the development of young people” (Durkin, 2004, p. 137). This literature has close ties to the South African context where there are various languages dominant and the language one speaks or can speak has a bearing on one’s relationships.

Thus, problems in interactions might arise not only from the inability to speak the language but also speaking it in the ‘wrong’ way in the space within which they exist. Language crossing can be a result in such scenarios; this is an alteration of a code by people not accepted as members of the group associated with the second language they employ. According to Kamwangamalu (2003), language crossing is concerned with code switching into languages that an individual is generally not thought to belong. Rose & van Dulm (2006) affirm that code-switching is a widespread phenomenon in South Africa and defined it as “alteration of language within one conversation, often involving switches within a single speaker turn or a single sentence” (p. 1). In this research, code switching is more related to the in-group, immigrant children who are more likely to experience crossing in attempting to gain entrance or acceptance into the in-group.

Kamwangamalu (2003) illustrates how expectations of rules of interpretation for the use of languages are used to determine a participant’s claim to membership in a given group. These are some of the elements that I investigate in this study to determine whether

immigrant children are under any linguistic pressure and how this helps them fit in, are they passing or are they being refused 'entry' as members of a linguistic group.

Apart from the impacts on parent-child relationships, the existing literature, for example Love (2007), Prokopiou, Cline, & Crafter (2013) and Orellana (2009) also focuses on feelings from the child language broker's own perspective. With some of the elements touched on slightly above, the literature continues to show bipolar results with regards to how child language brokers feel about brokering. Some indicate possible negative feelings on the part of the parents when the child serves for them as a language broker, "feelings of shame and uncomfortable feelings have been associated with having the child stand in for them as a translator" (Corona, et al., 2011, p. 790). Besides the shame associated with this, the role-reversal introduced by brokering may have negative impacts, in this regard, the traditional authority of the parent might in some spaces be shifted temporarily to the child, although literature is still divided about this aspect (Morales & Hanson, 2005). Because the process of language brokering is not easy and requires a certain level of cognitive ability, some children experience negative emotions. Though this may come as a developmental advantage, it is only apparent to the child later on, with benefits not appearing until adolescence (Love, 2007). On the part of the children, some research has also highlighted that "because of the added stress and burden with increased responsibility resulting from frustration, resentment and embarrassment, some of the children even refuse social invites where they view the possibility that they might be required by their parents to serve as brokers" (McQuillan & Tse, 2009, p. 9).

Some results on the contrary have reflected that children actually have positive feelings that arise from the process. Cindy, who was shown in a study translating for her parents in China, stated that she "felt smart" and, through brokering, had access to a wide array of information (Orellana, 2009). A study of Latino child brokers in America also

supported this with results highlighting positive feelings, which children associated with helping the family as a whole and also making them feel useful as individuals. Parents also experienced feelings of pride in their children (Corona, et al., 2011).

There is also literature e.g. (Acoach & Webb, 2010) citing that apart from the feeling of enjoyment brought about by language brokering, children also feel a sense of maturity and this is coupled with a sense of empowerment. It becomes apparent from the available literature that these positive feelings of empowerment and feeling autonomous, as a result of language brokering, are related to lower levels of depression in immigrant children (Love, 2007).

2.2.1 'Whiteness' in a black body

The dynamics and politics that surround language in South Africa have created a society which mimics the Apartheid era. In this regard, 'whiteness' is still considered to be enormously associated with power. Green, Sonn, & Matsbula (2007) seem to agree with the assertion that black and coloured South Africans still perceive white South Africans as the dominant group and add that, "power remains with the white people and power relations remain unchanged" (p. 428). Ratele & Laubscher (2010) affirm that in South Africa, race is historically positioned as a pivot on which power is balanced and in modern society, 'whiteness has maintained this weight. The assertions make it plausible to use any trait of 'whiteness' in blacks as a signifier of dominance and, 'tipping scales' in the balance of power. Language is one of the markers that highlight 'whiteness' or dominance in South Africa. The inability by migrants to speak local languages and opt for English in the context of South Africa might be perceived as a sign of dominance or attempt to appear superior, or of a higher class in the hierarchy than local citizens, leading to attacks of blacks by other blacks.

This in many ways brings into discussion the assertion that the xenophobic attacks mimic the nationalistic and sometimes racial ideologies typified by racism more than being based on the 'fear of foreigners' as the definition suggests. Kenneth Tafira (2011) contends that the discourse of xenophobia must be stopped as this is a racial act based on the othering of foreign nationals. Tafira adds that, this act of othering leads to the cronstruction of racial categories like *makwerekwwere* – "speakers of a 'strange' language with unusual phonetic sounds – bearers of an alien speech. The phonetic sound goes like *'kwerekwerekwere'* hence the name *makwerekwere"* (Tafira, 2011, p. 117). Tafira adds that other racial categories that are also created are: Magrigamba, Maforeigner, Amakalanga, Abantu BakaMugabe (Mugabe's people) and MaZimbabwe, among others (Tafira, 2011).

The power and dominance that is inherent in English is closely linked to the history of South Africa and the politics of language. In circumstances where immigrants can only speak English, these traits of dominance and power imbalance seem to be attached to them by local citizens. This seemingly threatens their position, and can possibly be perceived as an attempt to undermine them. Multilingual children on the contrary do not have this problem as they can eloquently speak local languages. This places a responsibility on these children to balance this scale for their parents and family members through brokering for access to resources and services but also to avoid the racialized categories and connotations attached with the inability to speak local languages.

2.2.2 Self/Identity as Narratives

Linked to the politics of language/English in South Africa is the use of language to create identities or identify who belongs, or does not, where. This has an impact on both collective identities and also plays a role in structuring the self in the context. Prevailing literature has made it pertinent that besides the parent-child relationships and feelings that

result from language brokering, the issue of identity is also central to language brokering of immigrant children. Available literature highlights that clashes might be apparent between the children and the new culture in which the child is immersed. This culture-clash is particularly strong for adolescents who serve as language brokers (Love, 2007). In support of this assertion, research into 36 bilingual Latino 5th graders in America (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002) has brought to light that children who serve as language brokers might feel caught up between two cultures. This brings to the fore the question of the identity of these immigrant children and, particularly as adolescents, as they negotiate the Eriksonian "identity crisis". How do young people deal with contradictions between families and the host country's culture?

Identity and language can never be separated, literature shows that identity is constructed through sameness and difference. Stuart Hall states that the same power of promoting difference embodied by language can also serve to exclude (Hall, 2000). Simultaneously, language functions as "points of identification and attachment and carry the capacity to exclude, to leave out, to render outside" (Hall, 2000, p. 17). Narratives cannot be separated from the elements which create the focus of the proposed research, identity experiences and meaning making come together in the proposed research. "As argued by Charles Taylor and Jerome Bruner, life is inevitably, inherently storied or narrative-like and psychological subjectivity or identity at any given time may be understood as a culmination or product of the story thus far" (Bradbury & Miller, 2010, p. 9).

According to Morales & Hanson (2005) in their review of existing literature, literature on child language brokering and language brokering as a whole is undeniably scarce. It is obvious that more needs to be done especially in the context of Africa where very little literature exists in contrast to the practice and necessity of language brokering in various spaces presented by literature.

2.3 Language brokering as an acculturation strategy

Although most of the available literature is not from the African context, there seems to be agreement that language brokering in immigrant children actually starts early as an aid to both parents and family members in the acculturation process as they learn new languages faster in schools and interaction (Ekiaka-Oblazamengo, Medina-Jimenez, & Nzai, 2014). In their study of migrants in the US, Morales and Hanson (2005) found that language brokering starts 1 to 5 years after entering the immigrant country and the child can be as young as 8 to 9 years old. In spaces like hospitals, there is evidence from literature that doctors report children over 5 years to be capable of brokering (Cohen, Moran-Ellis, & Smaje, 1999). Language brokering not only enables children to translate information and communicate this to their parents but also aids in developing an understanding of cultural practices and norms (Weisskirch, 2010).

According to Berry (2007), acculturation strategies are the multitude ways in which individuals and groups seek to accommodate to and become part of the host country and engender a sense of belonging. These strategies can occur individually (e.g. learning the new language) or as a group (e.g. living in an area with co-ethnics), both of which are relevant to this study, with the former being key to language brokering and the latter key to the location of the study, Johannesburg where the Zimbabwean immigrants live with multilingual co-ethnics.

The actions and strategies of migrants are dependent upon the attitudes of the dominant society (e.g. towards multiculturalism or segregation). Because of this, strategies may include adoption of the national language balanced with maintenance of the heritage

language, interaction with those from the new country as well as co-ethnics and participation in national and cultural institutions among other elements (Weisskirch, 2010).

The view of acculturation strategies as helpful aids is furthered by literature that highlights that language brokering may also serve the purpose of teaching parents and adolescents enough about the receiving culture to access resources and achieve success in adapting to the new culture (Valdes, 2002). Language brokers have been referred to as 'Gifted Young Interpreters' as they "demonstrate an ability to carry out the complex task of interpreting under particularly stressful situations" (Valdes, 2002, p. 5). Valdes (2002) among other texts also highlight the capacity language brokers have in providing support for parents and children through language brokering, often sought out by migrant families (Weisskirch, 2010).

Berry (2005) and Andreouli (2013), among other authors, add the notion that acculturation is an ongoing process in which immigrant parents may use their children as language brokers, even when the parents' understanding of the new language is sufficient, in order to build "redundancy in understanding" (Weisskirch, 2010, p. 72). In this regard, mastery of the language for the parents might be hard to attain, but through the aid of the child, they continually make an effort to attain more fluency in the language and understand the language in all its facets.

The above is further supported by literature stating that Latino and Asian descent youth who maintain heritage language proficiency sustain connections and respect with heritage culture, which then influences the quality of their relationships with their parents (Orellana, Doner, & Pulido, 2003). Looking at the identity of Latino children, Weisskirch (2005) highlights that even in situations where children and adolescents are 'forced' to be bilingual/cultural through language brokering, through acculturation, these children and

adolescents paradoxically develop a stronger sense of attachment and belongingness to their home culture. This is a particularly interesting phenomenon to investigate in Zimbabwean children and adolescents as they are in the midst of a myriad of cultures and their relations to their heritage culture is involved.

Through brokering and acculturation, the way migrant children identify themselves is a specific site of investigation. Language brokering has been stated by Weisskirch (2005, p. 296) as a means by which the "exploration and sense of belonging occurs". This was in reference to Latino adolescents, and the current study will explore a similar sense of belonging in Zimbabwean children in South Africa and questions of acculturation, and family dynamics, that have been neglected in research into migration and xenophobia in this context.

24. Spaces in which children serve as brokers

Spaces in which brokering occurs seem to vary from formal to informal spaces and may expose the children serving as brokers in some cases to danger, sensitive information, and adult responsibilities or even danger. Research on language brokering has revealed that children in California for example, offer their services to monolingual gangsters during police raids, translating between the police and the gangsters (Orellana, 2001). These are some of the services migrant children provide as brokers, in support of and mediating for their families and this service stretches to the community in spaces that may involve households and schools.

Research by Orellana (2009) in America introduced Estela, a ten-year-old (Spanish and English speaker) considered by her mother as the "right hand" of the family as she serves as a broker in varying spaces; she used English to make calls, schedule appointments and fill in forms among other things. Another participant, 12-year-old Nova, like Estela, was referred to as *el hombrecito* "the man" by his mother because he spoke for his parents at school,

clinics applying for work and even getting the mortgage (Orellana, 2009). It is apparent from the literature that language brokering is practiced in various spaces. This responsibility placed on the child might be dependent upon the space in which they are brokering concerning the potential danger, and the risk the children are vulnerable to.

In the American context, some of these spaces are similar with the African context and in many ways have been the focus of debate concerning children brokering in those spaces. In 2002, "California lawmakers introduced a bill to legislature prohibiting children from translating and interpreting in medical, legal and social service settings" (Morales & Hanson, 2005, p. 472). The basis for their argument was on three points, first, translating medical may negatively affect the parent-child relationship, second; the child might fail to translate the information accurately and lastly, delivering sensitive medical information to a child might be traumatizing (Morales & Hanson, 2005). These arguments combined gather support in literature, which illustrates that this assertion of brokering in hospitals as dangerous leans towards General Practitioners' broader construction of 'proper' childhood characterised as a time innocence and freedom from worry (Cohen, Moran-Ellis, & Smaje, 1999) (Burman, 2008). A combination of these views form the basis of this research as it attempts also to investigate the parent-child relationship and any impact that brokering could have as the children and adolescents broker in spaces which might be sensitive, ideally perceived as for adults or dangerous like interactions with the police and in hospitals where sensitive information may need to be conveyed.

The complexity of language brokering in medical spaces is further highlighted by a study conducted by Cohen, Moran-Ellis and Smaje (1999). The study conducted among 38 General Practitioners resulted in most practitioners stating the mediation of children as informal translators especially in consultations as 'sensitive' and unsatisfactory as the children cannot communicate some medical conditions or are emotionally sensitive to some

of the information (Cohen, Moran-Ellis, & Smaje, 1999). These spaces exemplify spaces, typified in the African continent, specifically South Africa therefore providing a possible space for brokering to occur but is currently not investigated. As a multilingual context, immigrants in South Africa bring a myriad of languages, which further complicate the dynamic concerning communication therefore presenting the need for translation. In cases where parents are not capable of communicating in such spaces, children may be required to step in, in such an under investigated space, language brokering deserves to be looked at.

In the context of South Africa, it deserves special mention that English speaking Zimbabwean children serve as language brokers less in formal spaces in comparison to the American context. It is important to specify that South Africa is dissimilar to other contexts highlighted by literature, where language brokering concerns adults finding it hard to communicate in the lingua franca of the host country. In South Africa, language brokering seems to be necessitated by the choice and insistence of local people not to speak English in preference to speaking vernacular to all black people. Hungwe & Gelderblom (2014) argued that, specific to South Africa, some spaces act as agents of social exclusion for immigrants and the main institutions responsible for migrant exclusion are the police, hospitals, banks and employees. In these contexts, (spaces) officials may elect not to speak English even if they are able to.

Exclusion on the basis of language in this way highlights the hostility towards migrants and refugees that makes South Africa one of the most migrant unfriendly countries in Southern African (Crush & Towodzera, 2014). According to Crush & McDonald (2002), the fall of Apartheid saw South Africa become a major destination for migrants and refugees from the rest of the continent. This still results in high volumes of immigrants who settle in the country, the influx of fellow Africans which has been responded to by locals with considerable animosity and intolerance (Crush & Towodzera , 2013). In light of this, research

by Crush & Towodzera (2014) further asserts that notable, apparently deliberate miscommunication is cited by many Zimbabweans as their most common problem in spaces like hospitals. This deliberate miscommunication not only embodies the xenophobic attitudes as stipulated above but also exposes a space where there is a need for potential brokering on the part of families who have experienced such attitudes in the past.

It is such xenophobic attitudes that make language brokering even when both interlocutors speak some English a necessity to investigate and bring to the fore. For such reasons, spaces like hospitals and other more official spaces seem to present brokering opportunities for children as some of the staff members have been reported to deny services to immigrants on the basis of their inability to speak local languages. Citizenship seems to be a determinant factor used to provide service or not to provide service, despite the constitutional protection offered to all, and language in these spaces serves as a marker of one's citizenship (Human Sciences Research Council, 2008). The subsequent extracts is evidence to this:

> *"When I spoke in English they ignored me… (They) just looked at me as if I was mad or something. So I thought I should speak in Zulu, but I was not good at it as I knew only few words. The nurse shut me up and said I was speaking inappropriately and asked me how I would feel if my language was spoken like that. To my surprise, he called on the next person and ignored me, serving other five people who were behind me. And then another local patient in the queue said something to him and it was only then that I was treated. I do not know how long I would have waited if that patient had not interceded on my behalf"* (Crush & Towodzera, 2014, p. 664, italics in the original).

This not only presents the xenophobic attitudes prevalent in accessing the basic services essential to all humans but also the important role that language plays in these spaces. In accordance to Hungwe & Gelderblom (2014, p. 220), language in this regard serves as an "agent of exclusion". It is apparent through the above that speaking a local language aids one in accessing basic healthcare and also comes as an advantage, without which, xenophobic attitudes may be expressed to the immigrant. According to Crush & Towodzera (2014), as prejudice and discrimination cut across all sectors of the South African societal landscape, few spaces are immune to these aspects and to its resultant need for brokers. 'Helping Officials' like teachers, social workers and the police have constant contact with migrants and refugees in their jobs. They possess the power to withhold services and have influence of the delivery of services in these spaces and, in some cases, persist in speaking their own language even if the consumers of the service do not understand the language (Crush & Towodzera, 2014).

Besides these spaces, spaces like public transport have also been explored; simple tasks like asking for the right taxi seem terrifying without some kind of translation as some of the drivers require one to speak Zulu or assistance will be denied. As Seroka (2011, p. 2) states, "they are often uncompromising and the usual response is "Khuluma isintu" (speak the language of the people or literally, 'Speak human') (Frontline, 1983, p. 73). This powerful statement that confronts people at taxi ranks and in public transport makes these spaces feared by Zimbabweans, migrants in general and non-Zulu speaking South Africans. It degrades the person implying he/she is not human, carrying with it a powerful threatening tone. With the impression this leaves on a South African, it is easy to understand why immigrants can be terrified. Immigrants who cannot speak local languages usually avoid answering cell phones; this is highlighted in a research on immigrants by Hungwe & Gelderblom (2014) where immigrants opt to switch off their phones or pretend not to

understand a caller using their home language. So dominant is the trend that Hungwe & Gelderblom (2014, p. 220) described taxis as "vehicles of social exclusion" since speaking Shona was observed as warranting 'dirty' looks from other passengers and possible sanctions from the driver. Added to this, Brian, who was a participant in their research, supported this by asserting:

> "You can't speak Shona in a taxi. It's like a dog barking in a taxi. They will wonder where the dog has come from...you are not welcome. You feel inferior and you cannot answer your phone" (Hungwe & Gelderblom, 2014, p. 86).

According to Carol Adjai (2010), in 1998, a Rwandan refugee was beaten up by a taxi driver in Tshwane because he was foreign and received cuts and bruises to his face and body. It seems apparent that immigrants are being attacked in these spaces on the basis of language as the most immediate identifier of who belongs and who does not belong. As told by a young Burundian man:

"*I was in those, those small taxi. Eh, there's just one lady, one big mama who came to me you know another thing they always want to talk to us in their own language, they don't realise that we don't understand, and if you are mistaken there it's a problem. When they tell you 'kunjani' [and] if you don't respond, [they say] 'ay these 'makwerekwere'.' So I get problem with that mama. She [greeted me in Zulu], I respond very well because at that time it was 1996 [and I had learnt a bit]. There I catch a little bit of their words [or] language. She told me 'kunjani. I said 'sikhona', but she realised that the accent is not South African. She start to ask me 'ay guy where are you from?' I start to joke a little bit: 'No I'm South African, … Mandela is my President, and South Africa is my country'…She kept quiet [until we got to the taxi rank when] she start to tell people, 'ay this kwerekwere, what what' … . People came to me they start to shout. They searched me. They nearly want to beat me. But there is one guy*

who was responsible. Always [in those cases], you find someone who can understand things. [It] is the one who always maybe keep them quiet or [something] like that. There is one guy … a taxi driver. He came and [calmed] them down, he keep me [safe] and took me and I escaped that day, but it was very bad, because I didn't know that it should happen like that. The way I was talking [with] that lady, I didn't know that and she kept quiet, when we reach there she know that there is many people there, when she start to shout. Anyway they will beat me … maybe. She start to tell me 'hey guy you're lucky, go, you're lucky' (Harris, 2001, p. 101)

The same prejudice and discrimination based on language has been dominant in literature not only affecting adults but also cutting across society to the young. In the 2008 xenophobic attacks, an account of the events depicts a young South African using the words, *"Vimba iShangane",* (catch that Shangaan), (Kupe, Verryn, & Worby, 2008). Based on language, some South Africans who spoke Shangaan were mistaken for Mozambicans and killed, with an incident of one of these attacks ending in a woman risking her life to save an attacked Mozambican by interfering in the local language (Kupe, Verryn, & Worby, 2008). This highlights the importance of language and the role placed upon it to exclude, 'other' and identify those considered to belong to a certain group.

As mentioned above, language in the South African context is intertwined in complex histories (Wa Thiong'o, 1986; Alexander, 2011; Achebe, 2006) and the complexities of language and historical relations keep forming intersections even when brokering is involved. The term *makwerekwere* has largely been used to refer to non-South African but African nationals residing in South Africa. "*Makwerekwere* aren't just any foreigners: they are specifically African immigrants, and they have been singled out for ridicule and abuse by many black South Africans" (Nixon, 2001, p. 30).

This term is part of the South African history and also intertwined with language, making it complex to deduce. In attempting to deconstruct this derogatory term, Khanya (2008), suggests that the term originates from the colonial times in South Africa where the Dutch found the local people in South Africa and called them with a Greek name *varvari,* a term associated with barbarians, because "to the Greek ears, they brayed 'bah bahs' in unintelligible tounges; South Africans claim to hear '*kwere kwere'* when migrants open their tounges" (Nixon, 2001, p. 30).

Apart from the barbarism however, the term also signified the sound of the click that the Hottentoten spoke and was strange to the Dutch. It is suggested therefore that the term *kwerekwere* carries connotations both of an uncivilized nature and represents the sounds of a foreign language. Francis Nyamnjoh (2006, p. 49) affirms this by stating that, "*Makwerekwe"* are individuals who are dark, invasive barbarians or stutterers who must be confined to the fringes". It is important to note that, language, African origin (darkness) and perceived barbarism are all intertwined to exclude to the fringes people with these perceived traits. This is visible in South and also exemplified above as non-South African Africans are characterised as criminals and also lesser humans through this derogatory term. The inability to speak local languages in South Africa not only serves as a signify of origin but also in some cases, a marker that one is a *makwerekwere (Gordon, 2010) and,* "incapable of articulating local languages that epitomise economic success and power" (Nyamjoh, 2010, p. 65). This makes brokering in the South African context an important aspect for concealing identity in language, to conceal the identity of parents and other family members as the child mediates for them in spaces where they might be attached with the term *makwerekwere* and all its connotations.

i. Brokering in schools

One space that has recently become the focus of literature concerning children serving as brokers is schools. For many families migrating to South Africa, education is one of the key reasons for relocating their children; and obviously the school is the primary social space for children. According to Prokopiou, Cline, & Crafter (2013), a frequent challenge for teachers and parents is the lack of a shared language for discussions about the school's expectations and the need of the children. As few schools have access to professional interpreting facilities, across the home language spoken by parents and the host language, children who frequently learn the host language faster than parents often serve as language brokers between parents and teachers in these spaces disrupting the usual relations between parents, teachers and children.

This has not come without debate, however, as commentators have advocated that children should never be used as brokers in school settings especially in sensitive or confidential matters (Prokopiou, Cline, & Crafter, 2013). Surveys in the USA have indicated that child language brokers translate notes and letters from school for their parents more often than any other documents (Weisskirch, 2005). These less formal and daily brokering tasks seem not to be met with as much resistance when compared to brokering in sensitive or challenging meetings. The responsibility placed on a broker may be stressful and excessive, added to this, the children may also lose time from school (Cline, 2014).

Specific to South Africa, the need to be proficient in local languages in order to be accepted or not be discriminated against is prevalent. The same resistance to English in the 'outside world' coupled with xenophobic attitudes seem to be mimicked in schools, placing pressure on learners to speak local languages. Osman (2009) states that previous case studies have drawn attention to how xenophobia manifests itself in classrooms and playgrounds, with

findings reflecting how immigrant learners were regularly subject to verbal abuse and name-calling from local students. These names include *kwerekwere, grigamba and Kalanga,* with some insinuating about immigrants not bathing properly or not at all (Crush & Towodzera , 2013). It is clear from the literature that there are obstacles faced by migrant students who attend school in South Africa but with all these obstacles, very little attention has focused on the impact of these xenophobic attitudes on migrant children. Even though research is consistent with the notion that one of the major sites for xenophobic ostracism is of foreign children is the South African school system (Crush & Towodzera, 2013; Fritsch, Johnson, & Juska, 2010), research on these issues is still scarce.

b. Power and language brokering

The above examples open up a new array of spaces which migrant children are exposed to early in their lives. These spaces reflect the need for them to speak local languages, also the dire effects of them not being able to speak, translate, or in some cases understand these languages. Brokering for parents in such spaces is a realistic possibility for these children. However, what does this imply for their well-being and the adult-child relationship if children need to step up and represent their parents in such serious and official spaces? The literature in this regard seems divided with some showing positive and some highlight negative effects. Some literature reflects that language brokering is a burden on the children and sometimes a source of frustration (McQuillan & Tse, 2009). Some advocate that, under no circumstances should children be used as brokers (Cohen, Moran-Ellis, & Smaje, 1999).

The parent-child relationship is also, through the literature, reflected as developing through the responsibilities given to migrant children who are language brokers as the parents trust them more and view them as responsible beings (McQuillan & Tse, 2009). Kaur & Mills

(1993) reflect that substantial language dependency for the parent on the child and increased child responsibility appears to alter 'normal' parent-child relationships, a situation which may lead to some degree of role-alteration. This has however been shown to have positive effects on the relationship with some parents seeing dependency upon their children together with their children's willingness to help, as a strong indicator of the family's closeness. (Kaur & Mills, 1993)

Salvador Minuchin states that the reallocation of parental power is a natural arrangement in large families, in single parent families and in families where both parents work, adding that the system can actually be functional (Orellana, 2009, p. 15). This is supported by a school of thought which states that language brokering is actually a 'natural' part of development for migrant youth. Language brokering as a process is presented as having little or no consequence for parenting (Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, & Little, 2014). In contrast to the negative impact of child language brokering in much of the literature, Roche et al. (2014) ascertain through their study that language brokering actually has positive impacts for families.

The responsibility arising from the child serving as a language broker is espoused in literature and linked to role reversal. The children mediate for parents or any other people; a shift of roles is evident as the children are supposedly in the position of authority or the helper of the parent shifting the traditional roles (Orellana, 2009). Parents ask questions from children who perform the brokering task and this places the child on the 'adult' end of the knowledge continuum, reversing the traditional roles. Apart from this, the child also speaks for the parent, even in social scenarios (Weisskirch, 2005), further ascertaining the power they have and shifting the traditional roles.

i. Parentification

Although many authors including Morales & Hanson (2005) note abundant cases of role reversal with regard to the child or adolescent language broker taking the responsibility of the adult, the effects of this power shift in the parent-child relationships and the power dynamics in general are still a topic of debate. Research on the psychological and socio-economical outcomes of language brokering is mixed. For some, the experiences result in positive outcomes such as great academic performance indicative of enhanced cognitive development and responsibility while other outcomes may include stress, shame, burden and obligation (Weisskirch & Alva, 2002). Orellana (2009) among others show that taking on these responsibilities highlights 'adultification' and 'parentification'. When children speak, read, or write for their parents, this weakens parental authority. Besides investigating these elements, this research also seeks to probe how empowering this is to the child and whether this may serve as disempowering to the migrant parent who is already vulnerable in this context.

The term 'parentification' was adopted from clinical work with children, families and adults, and it refers to when "a child assumes typically parental responsibilities for caregiving to siblings, parents or both" (Weisskirch, 2010, p. 78). This traditional view of role-reversal or 'parentification' also includes parent-child relationships in which the child adopts parental behaviours such as nurturing and protection while the "parent acts helpless, seeks reassurance or engages in other dependant behaviour" (Ponizovsky, Kurma, & Roer-Strier, 2012). This traditional definition was extended from Salvador Minuchin's concept which refers to "social or economic circumstances in which children assume parental responsibilities (Orellana, 2009, p. 15) to include" children or adolescents who assume adult roles before they are physically or emotionally ready to deal with them (Ponizovsky, Kurma, & Roer-Strier, 2012,

p. 988). Although they may seem not to be ready for the responsibilities, the children of immigrants often have better English skills.

Negative impacts of parentification are highlighted by literature stating that taking the adult role for parents might affect the children as this has been related to pressure upon translation and embarrassment. This might also have implications for their identity development (Morales & Hanson, 2005). Frustrations and embarrassment for the child also come as the other negative effects of language brokering, a study in Vietnam by Love (2007) however has depicted that the negative impacts are highly related to conflict within the family rather than to the actual service of language brokering. These feelings may arise from the child being required to play the role of the parent or upon realisation that they are serving as brokers for their parents in public spaces but are subject to their parents as adult authorities at home. This 'burden of interpretation' has also been highlighted in literature, participants in research by Kaur & Mills (1993), highlighted the pressure of being exposed, of having to take the initiative and being regarded as expert, hence the spotlight rested on them.

Adding weight to this, is evidence by Morales & Hanson (2005), asserting that children serving as brokers find translating and interpreting a 'burden'. Besides the pressure on the children, embarrassment and anxiety were also echoed, with one of the participants stating that, "Sometimes I feel a bit shy and feel stupid, that I don't want to go up to people and talk" (Kaur & Mills, 1993, p. 119). These emotions were in some cases accompanied by problems in roles that interpreters were called up to "perform prematurely, often finding themselves bearing the emotional and psychological brunt of the interaction and dealing with anxieties and frustrations of misunderstandings from either side of the interaction."

In contrast, some view this role-reversal as positive, benefiting both the family institution and aiding the parent-child relationship. The literature in support of this states that

"role-reversal is not only a source of pride and maturity for adolescents but also increases their self-efficacy and may provide special strength for bonds with parents which might work as a shield against stress" (Love, 2007, p. 475). Even though children are placed in a position to 'speak for their parents', this is also a welcome benefit to the family as the child might also teach the parent a second language beneficial to them (Corona, et al., 2011).

Parentification, according to Winton (2003, p. 58) is a "common practice in immigrant families and complicates normative parent-child relations" and can be 'adaptive; or 'destructive' depending on how it is applied. "Adaptive parentification rises in the face of family crisis, which can be described as when members recognize, appreciate, and acknowledge the child's contribution" (Winton, 2003, p. 52). On the contrary, "destructive parentification arises when the child is overwhelmed, or overburdened by caregiving responsibilities and receives little to no acknowledgement for his/her work" (Winton, 2003, p. 53). This is an important aspect as in language brokering specifically, immigrant families may perceive language brokering as part of the child's contribution to the family.

The debate of the positive or negative impact of parentification in language brokering has for long been argued, according to Weisskirch, "pathology of parentification may be in the eye of the beholder" (2010, p. 78). However, Weisskirch (2010) denotes that parents who actually use children as language brokers may be accessing family assets to maximize functioning for the family and for the child. "Parentification is perceived as the necessary and required adaptation for the family's current circumstances" (Weisskirch, 2010, p. 79). For many families, acculturation presents a process both stressful and difficult to handle, in the American context; immigrant parents who have children who can broker tend to rely on their children to ease the burden of this transition to function effectively in the society (Baptiste, 1987).

In immigrant families, “the role of intermediary with the outside world” actually falls on the children whose understanding of English is more advanced than the parents hence they take the role as brokers for the parents in various settings (Corona, et al., 2011). According to Orellana (2009), Salvador Minuchin argues that when children take the responsibilities in the household, this does not necessarily involve the reversal of parent-child relations or abandonment of parental duties. “Rather, households that are different from current, dominant, or “mainstream” norms should not be assumed as dysfunctional” (Orellana, 2009, p. 15). This gives weight to the assertion that parentification, when placed in perspective, can be functional and utilized for the success and survival of the family. The child or adolescent serves as the broker although ‘protecting’ the family in some cases, however, in such scenarios, traditional roles and relationships with the parent can still be maintained.

The above literature is supported by the assertion that considers brokers as “protectors or shields” for their families, using their position of power to protect the welfare of their parents and other members (Morales & Hanson, 2005). In light of this, role-reversal is present but its presence is not a hindrance to relationships but rather, a buffer on which these relationships are protected. They protect them not only from other members of the community but also from embarrassment and harassment. (Morales & Hanson, 2005). In the South African context, this protective role might prove a huge responsibility for the child when considered in a violently xenophobic context. This research thus has an opportunity to explore language brokering, xenophobia and family relationships, in a unique context, which very little research has attempted to look at through this lens.

Placed together, the available literature seems to be in agreement that the majority of “immigrant children and adolescents perform as language brokers in different spaces which

might include home, school, streets and hospitals" (McQuillan & Tse, 2009, p. 3). Unlike these examples from the US and elsewhere, what is unique to South Africa is that even where adults may share sufficient knowledge of English to communicate and interact, (such as in formal contexts such as schools, hospitals and government offices) colonial history, persistent racism, resistance to the idea of 'whiteness' and the xenophobic context, may still necessitate language brokering. There is, however, less agreement or consistency on feelings of both parents and children towards this process. This is coupled with insufficient information in literature for positive or negative impact of language brokering on parent-child relationships (Morales & Hanson, 2005). These areas, together with the importance of identity as constituted both individually and collectively through processes of identification and "othering" (Hall, 2000) are the specific focuses of this research. It attempts not only to place immigrant children language brokering in the context of South Africa but also investigate these areas and ascertain their implications.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research took a purely qualitative approach as a method of inquiry. The reason for this is because the available research and literature as shown above, clearly shows the figures, trends and patterns of migration with very little focus on the quality of life of migrants. Very little research investigates elements such as being a migrant child is South Africa, how it feels to serve as a language broker for the family, what this means for development, and the identity of the child. This gap is well suited and appropriately addressed by qualitative research. Moreover, qualitative enquiry is well suited to focus on the family including aspects like meaning and feelings, and what kinds of lives immigrant children live (Blanche, Durkheim, & Painter, 2011). According to Struwig & Stead (2001), qualitative research also acknowledges the individual's environment as an extension of the person. The research gives important inspection to the context (Johannesburg, South Africa) in which the immigrant families exist in as it has bearing in their experiences.

The research also aimed to explore the gap in research by investigating experiences of immigrant children, their families and specifically the importance and occurrence of language brokering in South Africa. This entails moving away from just the patterns of movements and figures of immigration of Zimbabweans to a more qualitative oriented approach, focused on understanding the issues being researched from the perspective of the research participants or 'through the eyes' of the participants (Struwig & Stead, 2001, p. 11). This is also supported by Creswell (2003) who states that qualitative research entails interpretive research with the researcher typically involved in an intensive and sustained experience with the participants (Creswell, 2003). In some research, the views of the participants are merely reported but this, according to Struwig & Stead (2001, p. 12) may deteriorate into anecdotal research which

reflects the participants' views with the research providing little commentary or analysis of the views provided.

3.1 Narrative Methodology

Narrative methodology operates with the foundation that people organize their everyday practices and subjective experiences, and through story telling people give meaning to their lives and action (Nueman, 2011). Using narrative methodology is essential for this study as the objective is to explore the subjective meaning and experiences of the participants in relation to xenophobia and the politics of language. These stories cannot be held as truth, but as conversational interaction between the researcher and the participant with the assistance of a contextual awareness (Wengraf, 2001). The stories can be used to help know people and their lives better (Frankish, 2009). In alignment to Reissman (2000) narrative methodology considers the subjectivity and positioning of the person. Bertaux (1995) asserts that the stories unfolded by the people can be utilized as documentaries to investigate or explore what is out in the world and capture its meaning. Though there are arguments about the empirical nature of using narratives for research, it is noteworthy that the subjectivity of the people and the meaning attached to their world is explored, and it is through sharing stories that this can be understood (Bertaux, 1995; Dhunpath, 2000)

3.2 Research Questions

The research project attempts to investigate language brokering by Zimbabwean immigrant children in the multilingual South African setting. Research on language brokering seems to be dominantly Latino-based in the American context, investigating children's experiences as brokers and also the experiences of the family as a whole (Morales & Hanson, 2005). Examples include studies about what Latino parents and adolescence think and how

they feel about language brokering (Corona, et al., 2011), among others who investigate parent-child-relationships and spaces in which Latino parents need brokering (Morales & Hanson, 2005). Some have also investigated effects on the parents but from a point of view of bilingual Americans in South Texas (Ekiaka-Oblazamengo, Medina-Jimenez, & Nzai, language brokering affects bilingual children parents' acculturation processes in South Texas, 2014). For this reason, it is of great importance to place research in the South African context to investigate:

1. What language brokering services children are performing for their parents and families; in which spaces do they serve as brokers?
2. How does brokering impact on the family and the family dynamics and traditional family roles?
3. How do children and parents feel about this brokering role?
4. In what ways might children acting as language brokers for their parents mediate (increase, decrease or perhaps both) potential xenophobic experiences?

3.3 Participants

The researcher interviewed 9 participants selected through convenience sampling. These participants included 3 pairs of one child and one of their parents. Three further participants consisted of 2 parents and one child, interviewed with no pairing family member. The nonprobability sampling method not only allowed access to participants at the researcher's disposal but more importantly, allowed participants to volunteer their participation to the study, as also alluded to by Blanche, Durkheim, & Painter (2011). Criteria were created as prerequisites and added to the participant's willingness to participate in the study, the participants needed to meet the following criteria:

i. Be a Zimbabwean child between 11 and 18, staying with their parents (the age has been influenced by the general ability of the child to communicate at this age range and broker having acquired another language in recent years (Moskal, 2010).

ii. Be bilingual or multilingual with one of the languages being a South African vernacular.

iii. Must have helped or still help their parents translate or communicate in different spaces recently (preferably numerous cases in the last 5 years).

The parents also need to meet the subsequent criteria:

i. Be a parent of a bilingual or multilingual child with one of the languages being a South African vernacular.

ii. The parent can be bilingual but only in home languages and English, not in any of the South African languages (Ndebele speakers are excluded as they can speak Nguni languages in South Africa (Skhosana, 2010).

Access to the participants was mainly through word of mouth and the assistance of the church where community members interacted with other Zimbabweans who met the criteria. As a Zimbabwean, it was easy for the researcher to use networks to find and access participants in both the church and the community. All the names and surnames of the participants were replaced with pseudonyms and as a further protective measure for the participants' identities, some of the ages and careers where altered by the researcher so as to preserve their identification through their stories (Age was altered by plus/ minus 2 years). After using the criteria and accessing willing participants, the research was made up of the following participants:

Table 1: Profile of Participants

Participant	Age	Gender	Children	Occupation	Date and reason to come to S.A	Brokering Activity
Kure, Edmore	39	M	3	I.T Technician	Arrived in Jan 2009 seeking for employment.	
Kure, Richard	15	M	0	Student (Primary School)	Arrived in 2008, to enrol in Grade 2.	Brokers for parents, family, and students at school.
Takura, Brian	38	M	4	Truck Driver	Arrived in 2009 – seeking for employment.	
Takura, Charity	19	F	0	Runs a Tuck Shop	Arrived in Sep 2009	Brokers for family and father at home, hospitals and other spaces.
Tinashe, Isabel	34	F	3	Housewife	Arrived in 2009 – to reunite with husband.	
Tinashe, Nosi	18	F	0	Matriculated	Arrived in 2010 to be with parents and enrol in High School.	Brokers for parents and siblings in all spaces.
Dijam, Nonku	21	F	0	Photographer	Arrived in 2006 to be with parents and continue with education.	Brokers for mother and sister in different spaces.
Nyasha, Dadirai	38	F	2	Housewife	Arrived in 2008 to reunite with husband.	
Panashe, Danai	34	F	3	Beautician	Arrived in 2009 to join father.	

3.4 Data Collection

The data were collected using narrative interviews, focusing on people's life stories (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). The choice for narrative interviews cannot be separated from the elements creating the focus of the research, which include identity, experiences and meaning making. Using narratives also helped especially with parents, to enable them to reflect on their earlier lives and recent experiences. This not only comes as an advantage to the researcher in attempting to elicit elements forming the focus of the research, but also through the narratives, participants look back to where they come from and forward, possibly envisaging a better and more hopeful future.

Narrative research also carries the assumption that "people are storytellers by nature" (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, Narrative Research: Reading, Analyis and Interpretation, 1998, p. 7). Narrative is a way of understanding one's own and others' actions, of organizing events and objects into a meaningful whole, and connecting and seeing consequences of action. Adding to this description, Denzin & Lincoln (2005, p. 441) assert that "narratives also express emotions, thoughts and interpretations", Riessman (2008) states that narratives do not merely describe what someone does but "also what the world does to the person. They allow us to infer what it feels like to be in that story world" (Riessman, 2008, p. 50), all of which are important aspects in focusing on the experiences of child language brokers and their families. The study further investigates the identity of child language brokers placed in between their heritage culture and the culture they have been acculturated into. "Identity work that people engage in as they construct selves within specific institutional, organizational, discursive local cultural contexts is embodied in the narrative practice by which storytellers use in narratives as they also make use of available

resources to construct recognizable selves" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 530). This assertion does not only speak to the possible access of the source of identity in narratives but also the combination of the resources by the storyteller and these are not only based in the immediate context but also the context in which they exist which is important to research.

The identity of the participants is framed as a subjective element and therefore the use of narratives from the participants is appropriate, as narratives allow for the experiences of the participants to come to the fore (Andrews & Squire, 2008). By asking the simplest questions like, "Tell me a story of…" people can think of a replay of the events as they happened, "an expression of identity, a "cultural trace" (Squire, 2005, p. 93). Since the identity of the child brokers has been influenced by their environment, their parents' own identities and what is happening in their current context and the world as a whole, how they respond in their narratives seems to be a plausible way to inquire about such elements.

As part of a group that suffers discrimination in South Africa, it is important that their 'voices' that are neglected or excluded within the dominant political structures and processes, are accessed (Squire, 2005). This also resonates with the idea of narratives for social change as narrating as a significant life event may itself facilitate positive change. Investigating experiences of breast cancer survivors, Langallier wrote that, "The wounded storyteller reclaims the capacity to tell, and hold on to, her own story, resisting narrative surrender to the medical chart as the official story of the illness" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 659). In the same regard, this research, using narratives, aimed to give immigrant children and their parents a voice to tell their own story to explore experiences is self-narration. According to Denzin & Lincoln (2005), this can lead to personal emancipation, enabling "better" stories of life difficulties or traumas. These are included in this research study, where the participants are immersed in a highly xenophobic context and discrimination is rife. In such cases, the narrator becomes his or her own audience, the one who needs to hear alternative versions of

his or her identity of life events, and the one for whom changes in the narrative can "stir up changes" in the life (Mishler, 1995, p. 8).

Zimbabwean children and parents in Johannesburg studied by this researcher are presented with an opportunity to both tell and shape their narrative; and this desire to have others hear their narrative may work as a source of urgency for storytelling. These testimonies, sometimes referred to as "emergency narratives" were also noted in Latinos in the USA, in repression, poverty, marginality, exploitation, or simply survival, the speaker speaks to the reader through the text often in the voice demanding recognition or needing our attention (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Zimbabweans in South Africa are similar to Latinos in USA in an oppressed position and their voices were expected to come out and it was hoped that the narratives serve to emancipate them and recognize their voice.

Since the proposed research involved the possibility of embarrassment on the part of the parent having the child serve as broker for them, parents and children were interviewed separately. The data were recorded, and transcribed after the interviews. Participants provided informed consent for these recordings (See Appendix A).

Interviews allowed an opportunity for the researcher to know the participants intimately, obtaining an understanding and a sense of what they think and feel but recording might distract the participants from the intimacy of the encounter (Blanche, Durkheim, & Painter, 2011). To counter this, video recordings were not used as they seem to cause more distraction than audio recordings which have the obvious advantage of keeping the data and without bringing the distraction that note taking brings (Blanche, Durkheim, & Painter, 2011).

The interviews were conducted mainly in English; each interview was approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes long. Transcriptions needed no translation with the exception of

phrases in which the participants code-switched in Shona, which the researcher has translated to English.

3.5 Data Analysis

After collecting the data using recorded interviews, the data were transcribed as the first step of preparing and organizing the data for analysis (Creswell, 2003). The interviews were transcribed verbatim to avoid losing any valuable data. This aided in preparing data for analysis and theorizing (Lerner, 2004). After transcribing, for easy access and navigation in-between the data, the transcribed data was coded. This is the "first step in the conceptualization of the data and seen as a key process as serves to organize the copious transcripts that were created from the recordings" (Bryman & Burgess, 1994, p. 443).

Thematic analysis was chosen as a flexible method for developing an understanding of these data "because of its flexibility and independence from theoretical frameworks, thematic analysis can be used within different theoretical (although not all) frameworks" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 4-5). Thematic Analysis can be understood as a method for "identifying, analysing and reporting patterns or themes within data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 79). Thematic Analysis helps to organize the data and provides rich detail and is particularly relevant for narrative interviews as the "story-teller reports those features of the event that are relevant to his or her perspective on the world. This is selective and unfolds around thematic centres that reflect to the researcher what the narrator considered relevant" (Jovchchelovitch & Bauer, 2000, p. 4). As narrative interviewing is a technique for eliciting stories (Jovchchelovitch & Bauer, 2000) and is open to other methods of analysis, thematic analysis can be helpful in grouping these stories and life events the narrator provides. Thematic Analysis can be an essential method in reporting experiences, meaning and

experiences of the participants or examine ways in which these are the effects of discourse operating within the context (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This resonates with the proposed research and the data collection method stated above.

It has been noted, however, that data analysis is the most vulnerable spot of the qualitative research process and, in analysing data researchers are alone with their thoughts, and with our own central role in shaping the outcome (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998). To aid this, thematic analysis in this research was also informed by "voice centred relational method" as described by Mauthner & Doucet (1998, p. 1). 'Exploring individuals' narrative accounts in terms of their relationships with themselves, their relationships to other people around them, and their relationships to the broader social, structural and cultural contexts within which they live' (Mauthner & Doucet, 1998, p. 9).

To be able to concisely manage the data and make sure the production of themes is sufficient to answer the research questions, the research coded themes from the transcripts gathered from the interviews. These codes are useful as they are "most often a word or a short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldana, 2013, p. 3). These codes made it easier to group elements or same narrative together and subsequently form themes as they are a relevant technique used to identify themes (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). Searching for themes began with collating the coded data which led to a list of different codes identified from the data set as proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The resultant codes led to the subsequent summary of topics which were discussed with the aid of themes:

- Spaces in which children serve as language brokers.
- The impact of language brokers on family dynamics.
- Feelings towards language brokering.

- Impacts of language brokering on xenophobia (Does language brokering increase or decrease xenophobic attacks?)

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical clearance for the proposed research was provided by the University of Witwatersrand non-medical Ethical Committee (See Appendix B). Throughout the proposed research, autonomy and respect for the dignity of persons was observed as it is one of the major requirements for voluntary research. As the principle requires, protection of individual confidentiality was continually observed even after the data were acquired by the researcher (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This was made clear to the participants in the information sheet (See Appendix C) to which they gave consent (See Appendix D). The researcher also took steps to make sure that children understood the forms and gave assent for their own participation (See Appendix E) after they had shown that they understood the forms. Apart from this, parents also gave consent for the participation of their children to make sure that the best interests of the children were placed first and the participants were not harmed (See Appendix F).

The narrative research approach required participants to give accounts of their coming to South Africa. This part of their lives might pose a risk for adults and children who might have experienced some difficulties and psychologically challenging moments in this period. Talking about such times might reopen old wounds about experiences that might also involve xenophobic incidents. In the case that such situations occur, the participants were referred to the Emthonjeni centre at the University of Witwatersrand for counselling at no expense of their own. This is the only risk entailed in the research. Deception was not used in the research and, as required, the researcher took steps to minimise and avoid any harm and wrongs (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.7 Confidentiality

The study preserved the anonymity of both the parents and the children. In this regard, the research participants have not been identified in the research report; their names or identities will be concealed in presentations, or any subsequent publications. Pseudonyms have been used always as a replacement for their real names. Social network confidentiality was also kept as no information will be passed to either their relatives or posted on social networks (Greene & Hogan, 2005). The data that were collected from the participants was kept in either a safe (if printed), or in a password protected computer (for soft copies) and will only be accessed by either researcher or my Supervisor. This was also relayed to the participants before the research for their consent. Confidentiality was also explained to the participants particularly with regards to maintaining confidential information offered by a child about his / her parent and vice versa. None of their conversations were discussed with either paired family members or other participants.

3.8 Reflexivity

The current research was conducted by a Zimbabwean to bring to light the experiences of Zimbabweans staying in South Africa and also to ignite discussion about the quality of their lives and looking at xenophobia from a unique perspective. In light of this, as the researcher, it was sensitive to hear some of the stories as they not only spark emotions on a human level but also were a reflection of some of my own experiences in South Africa. Having faced dehumanizing and name-calling myself placed me in a sensitive position but also fuelled me to believe more in this project and do my best to bring to light the issues surrounding the quality of lives of migrants. This was also an advantage in trying to access participants. Some of the participants mentioned that they were happy to provide the stories that highlight the plight of Zimbabweans in South Africa and it aided that they were speaking

about them to a fellow-Zimbabwean. Building rapport was therefore not hard for the research as the participants got comfortable with me easily and as a result opened up more.

4 Data Analysis and Discussion

When placed together, the literature and the data collected create a unique picture of language brokering in families in the context of South Africa, distinct from the other contexts in which it has been studied. This makes it important for studies like this to continue and open discussions about the quality and plight of lives of migrant children and their families. The most notable and recurring of the themes was the dehumanization of migrants. This theme was continually 'threaded' throughout the data, permeated all themes, throughout all spaces, impacted on the family and was strongly related to xenophobia, and provides an overarching theme for the discussion. The specific themes that emerged from the data and are discussed here include:

1) Space and language.

   Children serve as brokers in both formal and informal spaces and it emerged that movement between spaces, particularly in taxis, presented the most dangerous transitional zones.

2) Child-adult roles and family dynamics

   As these spaces entail more responsibility for the child as he/she is needed by the parents in different space, the second topic looks at how this responsibility impacts on family dynamics. Sub-themes include, parentification of the child broker, the impact this has on family hierarchies and the impacts on the identity of the children themselves.

3) Affect and Language Brokering

This cluster of themes focuses on the feelings brought on by the service of brokering, including positive and negative feelings for both children and parents.

4) Xenophobia and language brokering

This theme focused on whether migrants thought that the practice of language brokering increases or decreases xenophobic attitudes and discrimination and how it may do so. Sub-themes include resistance to English, xenophobic attitudes necessitating language brokering and the risk of not speaking English. These themes come together to consolidate the phenomenon of language brokering as a necessity dictated by the environment, protecting the family and school peers against the anxiety associated with not speaking local languages.

4.1 Dehumanization

The phenomenon of language brokering has been described by many authors including Orellana (2009), Morales & Hanson (2005) and Cline, (2014) among others as a daily reality in the lives of migrant children and families in general across the world. However, in South Africa, the necessity for children to play this role is only partly due to linguistic skills, or lack thereof, for communicative purposes. Language brokering occurs in the context of exclusion, discrimination and xenophobic attitudes as depicted by Hungwe & Gelderblom, (2014) and also Crush & Towodzera (2013). Language in these spaces is an agent of social exclusion (Hungwe & Gelderblom, 2014) and an othering element used to discriminate against and dehumanize migrants who cannot speak local languages (mainly blacks by black locals). In the absence of brokers, or in the inability to communicate using local languages, migrants are exposed in the world and can be ‘attacked’ in many spaces as they cannot speak or understand the languages themselves. Hate speech seems to dehumanize

migrants, targeted at exposing those who cannot speak the local language as the ones who need to be exterminated from the community. Language, therefore, performs "the dirty work of boundary maintenance" (see Yuval-Davis, 2006, p. 7) and the inability to speak a local language seems to increase the risk of dehumanization. As Nyika Takura (a child) narrates:

> *So these guys were saying ahhh ehhh this guy is not a South African guy so he is a Zimbabwean. So of which I was the only Zimbabwean, the foreigner there, so they were saying "No!", they don't want foreigners here, "a foreigner we treat him like a rat, if you leave one rat in the house, it will call out the other rats… we have to fumigate all the rats out in order for us not to have all the rats in the company because if you let the rats, they will call the other ehhh rats and they will destroy the company then all of us will run out of work because of them because they do the work" that was the main issue with these guys.*

Dehumanizing people by reducing them to the level of unwanted animals or vermin in the context of South Africa is not a new phenomenon. According to Neocosmos (2010), *amagundwane* (rats), is one of the derogatory terms used to refer to African foreigners who are also tagged *'Grigambas'* (Dung beetles) *'Makwerekwere'* and so on. Jacob Dlamini (2009, p. 66) contends that the rat occupies a special place in South African struggle mythology, *Amagundwane,* Nguni for rat is what you call scab labourers, a traitor is called a rat and it is not uncommon to hear striking workers call: 'Bulalani amagundwane!' (Kill the scabs) It is also not uncommon to hear people being hacked to death, thrown off trains, doused with petrol and set alight – all for being scabs and crossing the picket line. To be a rat therefore is to be forever marked for a gruesome death.

The term *amagundwane* with all its negative connotations has been placed onto immigrants, (who like scabs) are blamed for stealing jobs and identified through their

constant use of English. Coining them *amagundwane* not only serves to group and identify them, but also justifies inhumane treatment and possible killing of these people as it represents the extermination or fumigation of 'harmful' creatures, viewed and represented as non-humans. These names convey the language of 'cleansing' away the unwanted parts of society through xenophobic attacks and are similar to those used during the Rwanda genocide (Neocosmos, 2010).

The term cockroach is another significant term used both in South Africa to represent the immigrants and was also adopted in Rwanda to represent the Tutsis by the Hutus. Investigating this, Belman (2004) stated that once the other group has been identified as different, and importantly non-humans the lines have been drawn for future battle, ethnic cleansing, or genocide. In Rwanda, where the Tutsis were referred to as cockroaches or *inyenza*, the new government at the time had no intention of protecting this minority group from the attacks as the mobilization of these derogatory representations somehow justified their treatment or made them fit to be treated thus (Yanagizawa-Drott, 2014).

It is important to point out that dehumanization on the basis of language functions on 2 different levels. Firstly, is reducing one's humanity to the level of an animal or lesser species as a means of justifying the ill-treatment of individuals as discussed above. On another level, by dehumanizing other individuals, there seems to be the need to lessen their perceived racial superiority and this is mostly embodied in language and the history of the language. Specific to English and South Africa, is the racial arrogance attached to English and the superiority and dominance the language historically holds (See Achebe, 2006 and Wa Thing'o, 1986). In the context of South Africa, dehumanization with the use of the English language is a reality faced only by black immigrants in South Africa, never Europeans, Asians or Americans (Nixon, 2001). This dehumanization in many ways detaches the black speakers from the language perceived as the white people's language and displaces them

from a position of perceived superiority and dominance, to a 'lesser human' position where they are kept on the fringes of society. To affirm that they are on the fringes, categories are assigned to these migrants that serve not only to humiliate them but to categorise them as a non-human species, equating their language to animal-like sounds that are inferior to 'the real' speech sounds familiar to humans. "Constructed racial categories" (Tafira, 2011, p. 117) like *makwerekwere, amagrigamba, aMaZimbabwe, abantu bakaMugabe and Africa* are some of the dehumanizing terms used to refer to Zimbabweans (also see Tafira, 2011). In addition to explicitly dehumanising terms that imply that migrants are like animals, a number of other demeaning terms are used to ostracise and exclude children in schools. "These are labels that carry racial connotations, some being degrading and other jocular but offensive nonetheless" (Tafira, 2011, p. 117). Narratives of children in this research highlight how some of these terms are used even in Primary Schools to refer to migrant children, as Richard Kure (15) tells us about his classmates, calling him names:

> *This one is from Mugabe, he speaks Shona, he is not a South African…*
>
> *Yah, this other boy called Munashe from my school, we used to be in the same class, now he went out because they were calling him names, they actually called him "Mugabe" he is dark like Mugabe, so they gave him a title "Mugabe" so whenever like they are calling on Assembly, like "Munashe" then the children will say say "Mugabe" "Mugabe" "Mugabe" "Mugabe!" so the whole school even teachers started calling him "Mugabe"*

The label *Mugabe,* for Zimbabweans, may seem to be relatively neutral or even positive, given that he is the president of the country and seen by many to be a liberation figure. However, for others he is considered a poor leader, responsible for the economic and

political destruction of the Zimbabwe (Tafira, 2011) and, for many Zimbabwean migrants, the reason that they have left their country to come to South Africa hence connecting one's individuality to Mugabe is almost always used with these negative connotations. The term *amaZimbabwe* is also used to explicitly 'other' Zimbabweans, connecting them to the economically and politically challenged post-2000 state of the country in comparison to South Africa. In using these terms, local people create racial categories, with all being "value laden; carrying a particular meaning denting the social and cultural origin of the carrier" (Tafira, 2011, p. 117) and also degrade immigrants to lesser humans, challenged economically and to be kept in the fringes. The term *Africa* is another term that is used and has been of discussion lately in the media.

The use of this term, just like calling someone *Zimbabwe,* does not imply either national or continental pride, rather carrying racist and colonial connotations of places that are backward, challenged, of an inferior nature, backward culture or not fit for human survival. This relegates Zimbabweans to an inferior place and detaches South Africans from an African stereotype to a more advanced place separated from Africa thereby creating a perceived 'superiority'.

Calling someone by the name of a place is symbolic of the value and status attached to that place. When one uses a name of a place to refer to an individual, negative connotations usually attached to the place are also projected to that are attached to the person and serve to dehumanize, to degrade to the perceived and stereotyped level of that particular place. The language (referred to as kwerekwere), place (Zimbabwe or Africa) and people (Mugabe) foreign to South Africa all come together and are used to construct a racial category for black migrants by black locals and perceive them as lesser beings who deserve non-human treatment and be kept out of society. This dehumanization can be a consistent reality and challenge to migrants on a daily basis in subtle xenophobic encounters. These

encounters are visible particularly when migrants leave the ‘safe haven’ of their homes and particularly during movement between spaces or in the public interface with local South Africans. In most of these spaces, local people ‘dictate’ and require that local languages occupy these spaces and in some cases, any use of English is met with consistent resistance as the subsequent themes highlight.

4.2 Spaces children serve as language brokers

The need for language proficiency and language brokering in the South African context cuts across many spaces. Previous research on language brokering has highlighted how children serve in various formal and informal spaces and how this has brought controversial debates about allowing them or banning this service (see Morales & Hanson, 2005). In South Africa, confrontation with daily xenophobic attitudes and resistance to English have all contributed to the need for migrants to speak local languages and the extension of the variety of spaces this is needed in. The fear associated with being identified as migrants and outsiders has also given rise to the need for children to serve as brokers. It also creates, for these children, a need to intentionally ‘mask’ their identities as they transition through spaces and attempt to fit in and not be subjected to xenophobic attitudes in different spaces. Since transition through spaces in South Africa dictates a change in the language and need to be eloquent in the language (Hungwe & Gelderblom, 2014), the next section will be analysed from formal to less formal spaces where children serve as brokers.

4.2.1 Formal Spaces

4.2.1.1 Brokering in medical spaces

The resistance of English in South Africa has been highlighted by literature to cut across spaces and facets of social life. It seems apparent that blacks in many spaces cannot speak English although this might be the economic language. This limitation in most spaces is by blacks towards other blacks who are mainly dependant on English as the language of communication (See Crush & Towodzera, 2014, Tafira, 2011, Gordon, 2010, Green, Sonn, & Matsabula, 2007). Literature has also highlighted the importance of speaking vernacular in formal spaces in South Africa represented by medical spaces in this research. Crush & Towodzera (2014) provide literature for the need of brokers in these spaces to get services. Literature however, also reflects that besides just this aspect, medical spaces are much debated as brokering in these spaces has been banned in other countries settings (See Morales & Hanson, 2005). This is mainly because of the sensitive medical information conveyed to patients which children might have to translate to their parents. The type of this information may be psychologically challenging to the children and also the level of medical terms and conditions might prove hard for them to translate.

The current research presents many facets of medical spaces, some of which were shared with the literature. The medical space has been shown by the research to be a somewhat harsh area for immigrants who cannot speak local languages and this was supported by literature presented by Crush & Towodzera (2014). Discrimination and refusal to provide access to medical service seems to be intense with many healthcare workers highly resistant to English and any non-local languages in general, as shown by one of the participants, a mother who was denied service before delivering a baby. Isabel Tinashe (34) narrates:

I went to deliver my baby, there was a strike in the local clinics so the only option that was there was to go to the main hospital. So I went to the hospital to deliver my baby and it like I was in the labour pains, and what had happened was that the nurses they did not want to assist someone who is speaking English because they were allocating people to certain nurses, so when I went to the maternity ward there were about four people who were behind me and they were assisted because the nurses were even telling the nurse who was allocating them, that no they do not want someone who is speaking in English, how can they communicate with that person if they do not even know how to communicate until I think the nurse who was in charge forced someone to assist me. I think I was assisted when it was after an hour… the nurses were very open. Even the ones that were allocating patients to them were like "I do not know how to speak that language, I cannot help someone speaking in that language", of which that experience it was something else to me but I just thank God that this doctor came and he was my good Samaritan and assisted me, and delivered my baby very well but it wasn't easy.

These xenophobic attitudes shown to immigrants regardless of the intensity of the medical condition goes to highlight the extent to which English and an idea of 'whiteness' in blacks are resisted and how one might suffer if they do not possess the desired language skills in South Africa. This potentially endangers the lives of mainly black migrants who might be denied service based purely on the inability to speak local languages as exemplified above. In professions such as medicine and nursing, it would be expected that English would be an accepted language as it is normally the language used for training, the refusal to speak English therefore shows pervasive xenophobic attitudes towards most immigrant parents. This not only creates and maintains the fear and anxiety in being in such spaces but also

perpetuates the dependence parents have on their children who serve as brokers, as Edmore Kure (39) shows:

> *...in hospitals where they write your problems, before you see the Doctor, the nurses ask you, "What is your problem?" but if you don't tell them in our languages, it's a problem again because they need to know in their language so that they can write it down for them to give to the Doctor. So when, whenever I am going to the Hospital, my first preference is to go with my child so that if I can fail, If some of their nurses can fail to understand English, then my child can what? Can interpret to them with their language!*

Immigrants using English in medical spaces are not tolerated in some of the South African medical institutions. In such scenarios, medical spaces, function as agents of exclusion and this exclusion is based purely on language. Apart from the anxiety and fear this places on the part of foreigners, it is also significant that it increases the need to speak local languages, if a parent cannot speak the language, the need for the presence of their child serving as a broker is increased when visiting such spaces. The absence of the broker in this space is coupled with evident increase in discrimination and possible dehumanization in these spaces. Dadirai Nyasha (38) explains:

> *When you speak in English to people especially where there are a lot of people especially when you go to a hospital, when you speak in English they will laugh, they will laugh at you, when they laugh, they will start to talk ((whispers)) "Heeeee this that kwerekwere" whenever you hear kwerekwere, then you know ((Giggles)). Because there are some people who are experienced who told me that they call us Kwerekwere because we speak a language that they don't know. So when I speak English they know that this person does not speak in Zulu so they start laughing at you.*

By the locals being resistant to English and also dehumanizing English speaking immigrants in these spaces, migrants link these subtle and daily attacks to media and hearsay events of xenophobic attacks. Although these judgements may be biased or exaggerated; they have a basis in real life events and for these families, create an ever-present anxiety and need for the presence of a broker when immigrant parents travel and move between spaces.

4.2.1.2 Brokering in Police presence

There seems to be a vicious cycle in which xenophobic and discriminative attitudes in various formal spaces create a fear in immigrants who cannot speak local languages in different spaces, this fear is lessened by the presence of a child who can speak the language, translate, and even mediate for the parent. For the children, this fear is eliminated by the ability to speak and interact in local languages, masking their original identities and using the adopted and contrived identity even in formal and serious spaces like hospitals and the police station. The parent therefore learns that the presence of the broker guarantees their safety, reduces their anxiety and restores some sense of dignity, thereby taking the child with them to most places for the child to 'protect' them. This is perpetuated by the fact that even those locals in positions of authority in formal spaces choose to listen to the child capable of speaking local languages than the English speaking adult as stated by Edmore Kure (39):

> *...sometimes, I was helped when I was supposed to be given a ticket, because the way how I was explaining to them (The police), the condition and… But when my kid intervened for him to explain what exactly in their language, I avoided the ticket and it was far much easier and I saw it that it was easier for me to have my child on my side beside walking alone… Based on language, they intervene; they can listen to him, more than me!*

It is apparent that child language brokers are stepping up for the parents and family members to 'protect' them and reduce anxiety in spaces that might present a danger for them.

Although some of these spaces might be clearly defined between formal and informal, some of these spaces are vaguer and hard to define as either. One of the participants made mention of the fact that he translates for his father when he makes calls about job interviews or when he is on the phone with another person unwilling to compromise on their language. In some cases, children have to 'enter' these spaces and take over the phone conversation for the parent. Although this may seem like a formal and economic space where English is the language dominating, this is still resisted in some situations with people opting for their local languages. This unwillingness to compromise and accommodate immigrants also forms the basis of 'denying whiteness' in blacks, a topic that will also be discussed later.

In the absence of a child who can broker, parents are often subject to humiliating and dehumanizing responses when they cannot speak local languages. A space that embodies this is the work place, a space where the parent is mostly isolated from the child, and more exposed to attack. This is evident as the parents try by all means to fit their child language broker in all their schedules, except obviously for work. For some, it is imperative that they plan their days around the child as they cannot do much in their absence or have the fear of facing the multilingual world in the absence of the child. Edmore Kure (39) reaffirms this:

> *Yah, you know our kids they are still young, they want to go to school. When I am sick, you know, I think about these situations. We disturb them because they need to go to school, at the end of the day he can, he can be absent at school, because he is trying to help his father.*

This narrative is substantiated by Nosi Tinashe (18), a child who during the interview narrates the following:

> *I remember sometime yah! She (his mother) was going to the clinic yah! And I was supposed to go to school and she begged me not to go to school, because of, because*

of that language. So it's not a good thing hey coz sometimes it's disturbing me because I want to go to school, I want to do my homework, I want to do my hair, I end up going to town with her, I end up going to many places for me to speak on her behalf, so sometimes it's boring and ahhhh it's not good hey, sometimes, because it's like it's disturbing me somewhere somehow.

There seems to be a plausible explanation for the need for brokering necessitated by the resistance to English in South Africa and the unpredictable threat and anxiety carried in the dehumanization at the site of an English speaker who can possibly be called a *gundwane* and attacked. This exposes the parents who in most cases are not able to speak local languages. Of note, is the assertion that the need of a broker as shown by the immediately above pieces of data cuts across many spaces in the South African context. By taking the child with them wherever they go, the parents prove that a change in spaces also brings with it a change in 'safety' as they are exposed without the language. They exist and transit through spaces in which they have lost control because of their lack of language skills. These parents therefore tend to 'employ' the use of their more skilled children when entering these spaces. 'Employing' the children in these roles although beneficial to the parents, also entails a 'loss of childhood' for the brokers. The narratives of both the parents and children above signify the child stepping into an adult role which is highly valued by the parents and indeed by the children themselves in many instances but also involves loss and sacrifice, stepping away from their childhood role symbolized by loss of playtime, time away from school and the privilege of not bearing adult responsibility enjoyed by most children their age.

4.2.2 Brokering in informal spaces

4.2.2.1 Brokering in Schools

'Armoured' with their multilingual skill set and managing as much as possible to hide under the guise of this consciously attained identity, the service of brokers extends to the other spaces of their social life including the important space of the school where children connect with the wider South African context and in most cases learn to speak local languages. Although schools might be perceived as a formal space, the service that language brokers provide in these spaces seem to primarily occur in informal spaces like the playground and in less formal interactions (like between peers) and less often in the formal space of the classroom in interactions with authority figures like teachers (although this occurs at times). Of the 4 children I interviewed, 3 attended the greater part of school in South Africa, and 2 had just finished their High school within the last 3 years. It was only one adolescent who had not attended school in South Africa. Of the 3, all had a history of, or were currently still brokering at school. From the current research, there is an apparent 'clone' or mimic of the pattern seen in the 'outside world' landing in schools. In this regard, migrant children who cannot speak local languages run the risk of being picked out, bullied and dehumanized for their lack of multilingual skills. Local students either resist English or in some cases accept English in small and improper 'doses' that function to aid the much accepted *'tsotsi tal'.* Immigrant children who are multilingual are 'protected' from these elements and apart from this, also 'mask' their own identities as 'foreigners' or strangers and use their 'contrived identities' for the function of brokering for the other immigrant children, further serving 'shields'.

4.2.2.2 Xenophobic attitudes in schools

The creation and maintenance of boundaries among children seems to be as harsh and intense as they are in the adult world. Acceptance into the social world at school is complex and guided by many strict rules which are mainly shaped by language. Unlike the adult world where speaking the language and in some cases, just having basic words may be good enough, in schools, you need to know the language and speak it in a particular way for you to get the desired acceptance into social circles. This makes it easy for immigrant children who cannot speak the local languages to be kept on the outside and have labels attached to them. On looking back at her days at school, Nosi (18) reflects:

> *Back there in High School, like people used to talk about Zimbabweans taking their jobs, their parents' jobs. No, they wouldn't even say their parents jobs, "Imsebenzi yethu" (Our jobs), "Foreigners are bringing crime to our country, foreigners this, foreigners that" and you would think ohhh well, "Most of the people from Zimbabwe take our jobs, you know there is unemployment yada yada, kwerekweres are everywhere" ahhhh "Yah guys, you know I'm also kwerekwere right?"*

The use of derogatory terms which include the word *amakwerekwere* seems to be more apparent when children are new at school and have not yet familiarised themselves with the languages of the new context. This term in schools is not only used to 'other' those who cannot speak local languages but also on another level, this carries with it connotations of the undesired person whose characteristics are both unwanted and lesser human. Extending from this term are the phonetic sounds that seem to be related to the word. When a person is referred to as *kwerekwere,* it implies that they speak a language that is unintelligible and all that can be made from their sound is *"kwerekwere."* When compared to the language of the local people, their language is of lesser humans, animal-like barbarians who deserve to be

kept on the fringes and this somehow justifies their attacks, dehumanization and othering (See Gordon, 2010, Harris, 2001 & Khanya, 2008). The term carries with it the connotations not only of a foreigner from another country but also, a 'foreign species' whose presence among humans has to be prevented. Speaking about her first days at school, Nosi Tinashe (18) recalls how she was also affected by this word:

> *Some of the people were just rude to me you see, since I was not speaking their own languages, some they were asking me, "Where are you from?" "Why are you speaking in English all the time?" So some they start speaking like, "You Kwerekweres!!" speaking bad things about us, and even some at school, they were even saying that, "Eish these Kwerekweres, they are smelling blah blah, they don't use roll-ons and stuff" So at the other side it was difficult but at the other side some people they were just good to me, some students, they were good to me, they were nice to me, they were even asking what… the other games we were playing there back home, so I start to teach them some of the games we use to play back home and as time goes home hai, everything was okay, but it was not easy hey.*

Just as the derogatory *amagundwane* and *inyenza* have functioned and served to attach animal qualities to those who are 'Othered' as the foreigners, it also seems that learners also use terms like *amakwerekwere* to attach undesirable traits like body odour and barbarism to those who they recognize as the 'Other'. Attaching these derogatory terms functions to 'demote' them to a position lesser than humans and when achieved, this justifies the ill-treatment given to these learners by local learners. Purely on language merit, Nosi (18) highlights how she transitioned from being an outsider speaking English, to penetrating the circles of friendships as she managed to grasp the local languages in this space. Without these language skills, she would not have been able to make friends and would not have been able to be accepted in the social circles. Language, therefore, forms a prerequisite for acceptance

and without it, learners continue to suffer dehumanization. In trying to get this much desired acceptance, immigrant learners try by all means to distance themselves from their home language in the presence of local learners, even when talking to learners from their home countries. Nosi (18) and Richard (15) both show agreement in this assertion as they respectively narrate:

Nosi(18): *We don't want to speak like in Shona. We speak Shona like when we, when we, when there is no Zulu people that's where we speak Shona, but when we are like with them we speak Zulu. Because sometimes when we speak Shona, when they are around us, those Zulu people, sometimes they laugh at us, they say that we don't understand what you are saying this and that, so it makes us sometimes to fear to speak our language so we are forced to speak that Zulu.*

Richard (15): *If I go to school, am playing with my friends I don't speak Shona, even if they speak Shona, you know that when Shona we speak by the corners but if we are at school I speak either Zulu or other languages because I think reputation is very important because now if people start, here in South Africa in my school, other teacher in my school, they hate foreigners.*

There is an apparent need to conceal one's identity and intentionally 'mask' one's real self for safety at schools. If they do not do this well, they run the risk of being dehumanized and not being able to get accepted. This is clarified with stories of children who were not able to speak local languages and were not only discriminated against but also had their humanity questioned. Speaking about a Malawian classmate, Richard (15) described how his mental state was in question because he could not speak local languages. Being unable to speak a language fluently is often attributed to stupidity.

This Malawian child was denied by his peers, labelled as abnormally functional and 'retarded'. All of which carry connotations of a lesser being whose function resembles animalistic qualities, all based on the inability to speak local languages. This in some way justifies the lesser human treatment he gets, as he is a lesser human, closer to animals than humans. To them he is undeserving of or does not qualify for human treatment (Neocosmos, 2010). It seems that this also nullifies some guilt that comes with degrading other human beings. In the same regard as attaching derogatory terms like *amagundwane* which in some ways justify the burning of human beings in South Africa as this is perceived as 'fumigating the community' of scabs.

It is interesting to note that in schools, children who serve as language brokers for their families also 'step up' and aid the less capable learners who cannot speak local languages or new students who have just joined the school. Richard played an 'adoptive' role to a new Zimbabwean student who joined his class and apart from this, also aided this Malawian learner who was also new at the school.

> *There was this other child that was ahh when I was in grade 3. That child was coming from Zimbabwe; actually, she didn't know how to speak English, she didn't know how to speak these current languages in South Africa. So what happened is ahhh, when my teacher was speaking to her, she didn't understand what actually Mam was trying to say. I still remember ahhh Mam was actually teaching about ahhh time. So Mam was "Ahhhh Ropa…" her name was Ropafadzo so when Mam was saying "Ropa", she was coloured my teacher, so she couldn't say Ropafadzo, she said, "Ropafazdo", "Ropafazdo!", then she is looking wondering who is Ropafazdo, she is looking, then I said, "She's looking for you", then Mam was like, "What is that answer for that question, question 2?" Then she was like, then she said to me "Wha.." "I can't", she said to me "Handizive (I don't know) what Mam is trying to*

say". I was like to her, "Vari kutrier kuti vape answer iri paboard for number 2(She is trying to say, give her the answer for the question 2 on the board)" You understand?

For the language broker, there seems to be an immediate and almost automatic response and urgency to mediate in varying spaces and between different kinds of people. Although brokering in schools has been looked at in the literature, it is still mostly contained to brokering between parents and teachers (Prokopiou, Cline & Crafter, 2013; Cline, 2014) and barely looks at brokering amongst other students and teachers. From this research, there seems to be a concern about the well-being of other learners who cannot speak local languages and the broker therefore steps in to aid them. It seems that the almost natural response of aiding as a 'shield' is used by the children even with the change in spaces as Richard (15) goes on to elaborate that he 'adopted' and took care of other children from other nationalities, mediating for them and aiding them at school.

From this research, there seems to be an unearthing of three main layers of brokering within the school settings. Departing from the literature which mainly looks at brokering for parents from and about school (See Prokopiou, Cline, & Crafter, 2013; Weisskirch, 2005 & Cline, 2014); this research has uncovered that children broker between teachers and parents; between learners and teachers and also between learners themselves. Vee Moyo, a mother who participated in the research emphasised how it is important for her to take her child to meetings she attends at the school. In this regard, she reiterated that in most meetings, local vernacular, in the form of Afrikaans is used, necessitating translation from her child who speaks and studies Afrikaans at the school:

Learning the local language did help as well with Afrikaans because it's a lot of people especially from their school; when we go to meetings and stuff like that who

we meet and they speak Afrikaans, so now I know the basics from my child and that helps… it happened with the little ones, at the nursery school, we went in for a meeting. I don't know for some reason the person who was chairing the meeting assumed that we all spoke Afrikaans, and I was with my older child, she was there. So she started to speak in Afrikaans, Afrikaans, Afrikaans, and I just sat there, I was clueless and so what she did, she would tell me now they are talking about this, now they are talking about this, just the basic points. She wouldn't translate everything word for word but she would tell me, "Ohhh, now they want to buy a Jungle Gym, this is how they want to fund it". So that helped a lot.

In South Africa, different spaces have been recognized as having the potential to function for social exclusion (See Hungwe & Gelderblom, 2014). It seems apparent that the ignorance embodied in the assumption above, serves to exclude people who cannot understand the language. Although this might not have been intentional, these assumptions serve the interest of preventing 'linguistic genocide' while at the same time effecting the "dirty work of boundary maintenance" (See Yuval-Davis, 2011 p.27) which keeps the non-Afrikaans speakers as the Other, kept out of the discussion through the use of language. This phenomenon is also seen in the continual perpetuation of the resistance of English exemplified by the xenophobic attitudes, which necessitate the service of language brokers. The service of language brokers for parents is relevant in the space of schools in South Africa if they are necessary to avoid exclusion. It is imperative to note that in comparison to literature available, this need is less formal for parents but it is however for their benefit in line with literature (See Prokopiou, Cline, & Crafter, 2013; Cline, 2014).

Immigrant children who serve as brokers are not only beneficial in meetings but also in direct interaction between parents and teachers for those parents who have limited English skills. Lack of a shared language is always a challenge in this type of interaction but the

presence of a broker lessens this. Richard Kure (15) who has experienced this and mediated between his father and teacher highlights the need and the occurrence of this service:

> *When I was speaking to my teacher actually, when we wanted to fetch reports, it was end of term. So the teacher speaks Afrikaans and English and my dad is not so good in English. So when he was speaking to my teacher, instead of him to speak in past tense, he was using present tense like ahhh, "When I went home and took his book" he was saying, "When I went home and take his book", so when he was trying to speak, I forgot what he was saying but it was funny and it was an embarrassing situation like for, for, for a grown up. So when I got home, I said "Dad, what were you trying to say to my teacher?" And he is not that type of a person who, you know, accepts to take correction, or to be corrected, if you correct him, ah ah, the whole day. He will say "heeee don't correct me what, what, what" so for you to finish the story just keep quiet, whatever he says haaaa that's it.*

Schools seem to always carry an ever-present need for immigrant children to serve and although in some cases this may not always present themselves in local languages specific to South Africa; it might also be salient in the English language as the parents might not be well acquainted with the language. English also in some cases necessitates the need to broker between learners in schools. As presented above in this section, new learners who cannot speak local languages are in danger of being discriminated against, dehumanized and being ostracized by other students. Immigrant students who serve as brokers at home and in other spaces also show agency as they come to the aid of these children in social interaction at school with the teachers or among fellow-learners. Nosi Tinashe (18) recalls how she got to learn some of the local languages:

I remember at school, that there are some other times that the people they are discussing in Zulu and you have to… they were speaking in Zulu and that time I didn't understand Zulu. So it was a disadvantage on me at that time coz I wasn't understanding what they were saying, so I had to ask for my Shona friend so that he can translate in English, so that I would understand what they were saying, yah! So now I can see that it is an advantage coz now I can speak Zulu, I can see that it's an advantage coz now I can understand like everything like what they are saying, they cannot say anything

The discrimination, prejudice and dehumanization instantiated in xenophobic attitudes and the resistance to English in the 'adult world' seem to mimic themselves in South African schools (See Osman, 2009 p.2; Crush & Towodzera, 2014) making this space in many ways an agent for social exclusion for immigrant children whether in the class or in the field. This necessitates immigrant children who are multilingual to 'mask' themselves in their acquired abilities to avoid all these undesired treatments. Adding on to this however, this also makes them take responsibility for the safety of the other learners who are not multilingual or new to the context, 'shielding them' from being ill-treated in the same way they 'shield' their parents and family members at home and in other space. Another space that this happens often and is an example of children stepping into the role of 'shielding' family members with their multilingual skills in taxis.

4.2.2.3 Brokering in Taxis

The literature has highlighted the importance of language in taxis and has gone further to describe taxis as agents of social exclusion in the South African context (Hungwe & Gelderblom, 2014; Adjai, 2010). The fear and the anxiety elicited by taxis as a space all embody the effects of repeated resistance to English and xenophobic attitudes that characterise the space requiring fluency in local languages (Harris, 2001) or the presence of a

broker. These views and assertions from previous research seem to resonate with findings of the current research. In this regard, most participants stated how they not only feared speaking in taxis if they were not capable of speaking local languages but also stated the need for their children to serve as brokers in these spaces as a means to reduce their anxiety and fear. Edmore Kure (39) narrates:

> *We had a challenge… I had a challenge on taxis, sometimes you fax a CVs, where you don't know, those guys can reply, say you have to come for an interview but for you to get ehhh that place, it will be a challenge, because you can get to a taxi rank where those guys who control taxis they can tell you that no If you are speaking English, I am not in London, I can answer you (laughs)… when you are in the taxi also they… they speak in their language in terms of money, the driver when you are speaking with English they cannot even like to you, unless even maybe for him to drop you, he acts as if he is not understanding you.*

Resistance to the use of English seems to be a dominant feature in taxis and facilitates the agency of taxi drivers as socially excluding to immigrants (Crush & Towodzera, 2014). Most of the parents agreed that taxis are particularly anxiety inducing and hard spaces to navigate if you do not speak local languages and this necessitated creating their schedules around their children as this lessens their anxiety. In supporting the above, Dadirai Nyasha (38) also states the following:

> *In the taxis again, when you are travelling going to Joburg or somewhere, and maybe you don't know, you know I was struggling with the language so when they speak and when they driver speak and you don't understand. Then you ask, maybe I don't understand or something, people will start to laugh in the taxi and eyyy you will start to feel like something and even the taxi driver will will continue to speak in his*

language and you don't know, you see, maybe he is asking for moneys and you don't know. Maybe you will start to see people are taking money to the driver then you know that ah ah, this is time to pay ((Laughs)) … Even to ask, the taxi driver, you want to ask, "Is this taxi going there?" Coz you will be afraid to get lost, that person will start to laugh, "Where are you coming from? You do not know how to speak Zulu? Ehhh? What what what what what". After that, that's when maybe they gona tell you that this taxi is going wherever and nit maybe in English, in their language, that you then like maybe he is saying this. Sometimes I used to get lost.

The social exclusion immigrants meet in taxis repeatedly warrants the fear of this space reflected in literature and by participants in the current research. Being 'othered' as not belonging by the language one speaks becomes an important marker. Children who serve as brokers highlight how they serve more in this space in comparison to others and parents usually need them to travel with them when they use taxis.

Nosi Tinashe (18) explains:

So my mother wanted to ask where we get the…where is the, we were looking for Bree taxi rank, yah. So we were suppose ask where is that taxi rank, so my mother didn't know how to ask in Zulu, so she knows, she knows that if she tries to speak in English, it's difficult and some of the people, they don't like that, they will hate you because they think maybe that, you see yourself that maybe you are better than them, so she, she said that, "Can you ask in Zulu?" Then I ask to another guy in Zulu where I can get the Bree taxi rank, I asked in Zulu so I helped my mother for that. So I noticed that every time when my mother would want to visit, she has to go… I have to go with her and help her with some languages because she was scared of speaking Zulu and stuff.

Not only does the child in the above extract step in to mediate for the parent but also, in a seemingly dangerous situation, the child steps into the 'adult' role, a scenario important to parentification which will be discussed in later themes. It is important to note from the above that taxis as a space are threatening to immigrant children and parents in general and this fear is based on the ability to speak local languages to communicate about fares, destinations or the inability usually in parents. When parents need to travel, they are dependent on their multilingual children to mediate for them as soon as they are needed for directions or money transactions in the vehicle as Richard Kure (15) states:

> *In a taxi, he (the father) wanted to pay money, so the driver was actually speaking to him in Setswana, so the driver was now saying you gave me money which is short. Then the driver was actually speaking to him but he thought he was speaking to someone else. Then he said, "No I gave you enough money", but the driver kept speaking in Tswana, mina I was actually translating for him… you know taxi drivers, they start to get to violent, so that's when I say, "It's fine, let me translate."*

It may seem that by attempting to conceal the foreign identity of the parent by speaking on their behalf, the children may paradoxically reveal their inability to speak for themselves and therefore identify them as foreign. However, families seem to have developed very subtle forms of interaction between parents and children, which does not entail overt translation in such contexts or even require eye-contact to happen. The children seem to naturally step into the role of brokering the moment a local speaks in vernacular to the parent. There seems to be an 'unwritten' and 'unrehearsed' process that emerges that has dictated the way parents function between spaces like a taxi with their children as language brokers. The contextual and linguistic knowledge that most of the children have is that when they travel with their parents, means that they automatically speak for their parents at hearing a local vernacular.

4.3 Feelings towards brokering

4.3.1 Positive feelings

The research found that the service of brokering elicited positive feelings on the parts of both parents and children. Brokering in a xenophobic space is obviously concerning for the parents but is actually a positive aspect for the family and individuals. Serving as a broker seems to aid with the self-esteem of the broker upon being reflexive of themselves as individuals. There is a sense of pride salient in the literature (Love, 2007; (Corona, et al., 2011& Morales & Hanson, 2005 p.22) and the data of the present research. Nosi Tinashe (18) explains how she has more pride and self-esteem because of brokering:

> *It makes me feel good that now I know how to speak Zulu, I can translate to my parents, it makes me feel good, it makes me feel good as well that I am learning another language. I can even translate to my mother and now she is understanding, everyone now is understanding even when they are speaking Zulu... I am feeling good, because sometimes it makes me have like confidence in everything because you know like the more you speak with different people, asking a lot of things, It makes you sometimes to grow, it makes you sometimes to have confidence in life, so at the other side, it's fine, it makes me to know how to… Coz I used to be scared like to talk to the people but now I experience myself that, I see myself that I have changed I'm no longer scared to talk to different people like strangers.*

It is pertinent in the above that Nosi (18) repeated "…makes me feel good", emphasizing this positive feeling arising from the service these children provide. There seems to be an apparent sense of pride that arises from the ability to translate for the parent or family members. It is important to note that an accomplishment of the 'protection' or guaranteeing the safety of the parent or family members somehow instils the self-confidence in the child. Although this is closely tied to a fear of speaking to people in possibly

xenophobic spaces, the actual act of being able to talk for others alleviates this fear and replaces it with a reassurance of self-confidence. It seems that the ultimate goal for the children is to 'shield' their families from the potential dangers of not knowing local languages and the attainment of this protective role is the source of the positive feelings for the broker. Charity Takura (19) explains:

> *I feel very happy because sometimes, if you don't understand the language, both of you, you will just keep quiet then sometimes they are planning something bad, you don't understand, so sometimes it's very good to understand the languages then you interpret to someone like my father.*

This also seems to create a sense of happiness in the parents as they take comfort in the fact that their children are safe in their absence because they can navigate the world as the children are equipped with multilingual skills as put forward by Edmore Kure (39). There is obviously apparent sense of pride, happiness and joy that become salient through acquiring safety either for self, reducing anxiety for parents or parents knowing that the child is safe because of their brokering skills. Parents seem to gain some happiness from the fact that their children are preparing for the outside world and life in South Africa already mastering local languages. Dadirai Nyasha (38), a mother from the research narrates:

> *I feel happy that at least I am learning something from my child, her going to school, I am learning. So I think I learn quite a lot from her, coz she could come with ahhh languages, even Sotho, she would just speak and I would ask her what does this mean ((Laughs)) and she would tell, and you would see that ahhh of course it's exactly what these people are speaking and the same language.*

4.3.2 Negative Feelings towards brokering

However, despite these reported positive feelings, there is also evidence that brokering is associated with embarrassment, frustration, anxiety, being a burden, among other emotions on both parents and children (Morales & Hanson, 2005; Kaur & Mills, 1993 & Corona, et al., 2011). This is reflected in the participants of the study. Some of the children serving as brokers view this service as a burden that taxes their free time and sometimes keeps them from school. Charity (19) explains:

> *It's giving me a great job hey because sometimes I don't go to…I remember sometime yah! She was going to the clinic yah! And I was supposed to go to school and she begged me not to go to school, because of, because of that language. So it's not a good thing hey coz sometimes it's disturbing me because I want to go to school, I want to do my homework. I want to do my hair, I end up going to town to her, I end up going to many places for me to speak on her behalf, so sometimes it's boring and ahhhh it's not good hey, sometimes, because it's like it's disturbing me somewhere somehow*

This notion of brokering as a burden on the child is also echoed by the parents and this suggests how important and visible this notion is to all family members involved. Edmore (39) supports this by stating:

> *I don't feel comfortable. You become a burden! It's like ehhh when you become a burden, you are not making somebody feel happy. Because my kid also, they want to feel happy on their own thinking, their own doing their own things, but every time you will be asking, "I need to go there" because you cannot just sit, one of the things must be, you must be moving out, that is why we are here. But you need to, you need to take them around, you need to, as I said, you disturb them, so you are also becoming a burden again to them.*

These extracts are from a parent and a child from different families, and it seems evident that there is recognition of the feeling of being burdened by parents and children. The effect of this may be an alteration of power dynamics and alter "normal" childhood priorities. One of the arguments presented by the literature is the impact of brokering on family dynamics and hierarchies. Parentification has taken centre-stage with some stating that brokering has positive impact on the dynamics and some stating that the service of brokering has to be banned as it places the child in the role of the adult at a tender age, a term that has been coined 'adultification' and places the parent in the role of the child, 'infantilization'. This research also explores the impact of the children 'stepping' into the adult role in South Africa where they are presented with many potential dangers and is the focus of the next theme.

4.4 Impact of brokering on family dynamics

Feelings (positive or negative) that originate from providing the brokering service or being served as the parent have been shown to have an impact on the relationships, dynamics and also interaction in the family (See Morales & Hanson, 2005; Kaur & Mills, 1993; Weisskirch, 2005). These impacts also form part of the focus of this research and the sub-themes that capture the subsequent section. Family dynamics are characterised by power dynamics in which the hierarchical power flows from the parent to the child (Berry, 2005) (Prokopiou, Cline, & Crafter, 2013). As highlighted by the literature and this research to some extent, a child serving as a broker is viewed by some as interruption to 'normal' dynamics, altering the parent-child relationship although some view brokering as having no consequence for parent-child relationships (See Kaur & Mills; Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, & Little, 2014). From the findings of this research, it seems apparent that there is evident fear of this shift in power or authority on the part of the parents. In this regard, parents verbalised that they are embarrassed by their children serving as brokers and translating for them in

many space as they felt they were somehow being placed in the role of the child. This was summed up by Brian Takura (38) who said:

> *Yah, it's like if you are being translated by your child ahhh it's like you are under your child, you are not educated, you are someone who is not educated because you cannot understand this language whilst your child understands. So you are being embarrassed to say ahhh "I have to force myself to learn this language, just because my child is now being a translator of me.*

In light of the above extract, it is pertinent that for the parent, it is not an easy position to be placed 'under' the responsibility or the mediation in the presence of the child. This challenge in traditional roles makes the parents uncomfortable as they are letting their child take guide of them. The parent further explains that it would be less stressful if the person translating was an adult, showing that the shift in traditional hierarchies is a cause of unease and anxiety for the parent. In the traditional roles, the child is mostly dependent on the parent, with presence of the parent providing surety, safety, and comfort for the child. This is however reversed in situations where children serve as brokers. In these situations, the parent becomes dependent on the child, whose presence provides a sense of security, surety, and comfort as shown by many parents in this research, and this is contrary to existing traditional roles. This is particularly important in contexts such as Johannesburg, where levels of crime and xenophobic threats mean that parents' concerns for the safety of their children must be further complicated by the recognition of children taking responsibility for their own and parents' safety. This 'turn-over' of traditional roles seems to be responsible for the lack of ease and the anxiety observed in parents.

Placing the 'microscope' on the participant children however paints a picture quite different from that provided by parents. In this regard, the children still view themselves as

under the control of their parents and assert that the parents have the power with regards to instruction and determining how the child behaves even in the absence of the parents. Nonku Dijam (21) narrates:

> *This is what I always use to think, okay well, I can't afford to lie to my mum, okay this is a big issue now, you understand? And the other thing is, okay now, now what's going, I can't do that to myself neh, so it was, it was that I had my mum and the basics that I learnt, I think they kept me going, to say you know what I learnt this, and I'm not going to change, because of what I have seen… It used to look nice, fun and cool but when you go back home you'd think, "crap nah that's not right, why must I wear that?"*

The above except provides an illustration of how parents of brokers still maintain their power and hierarchies are maintained in the family regardless of the child stepping in to mediate for the parents in different spaces. This resonates with theory presented, stating that brokering actually has little impact on the dynamics and can actually be functional (See Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, & Little, 2014 & Orellana, 2009). Apart from this, it is evident that although the children are the ones who are in control of the multilingual skills, the parents still hold the power of how the children deploy these skills, impacting on how they speak and in which situations they can use the language skills. This means therefore that although the children may be 'the voices' of the parents, this voice is still under the guidance and instructions of the parent hence the parents still maintain parental power and control in the family dynamics and take responsibility for protectively guiding their children in the world. Charity (19) explains:

> *…my father was saying ehhh if the people they are talking, just keep quiet, don't answer them or talk anything coz they are going to harass you or do anything to you*

then sometimes you just keep quiet, my father saw the pain for me, if they are telling me something then I will tell them, he will say no no keep quiet, then we will go home then we will live like that.

Literature seems to be consistent in affirming that children who broker for their parents actually develop closer relationships with their parents (See Roche, Lambert, Ghazarian, & Little, 2014; McQuillan & Tse, 2009; Kaur & Mills 1993). It seems apparent that regardless of some negative feelings associated with brokering, parents and children actually form a close relationship. Resonating with this, this research has discovered the same as parents and children cited that their relationships have actually developed positively as a result of their service as brokers. Even in cases where parents previously verbalised being embarrassed, they still recognized that their child serving as a broker has brought them together, as Edmore Kure (39) states:

Ehhhh sometimes it makes our relationship to be stronger, because he is helping, he is now becoming more of helping the father, than the father to help the son

Interestingly, the words of the parent highlight the acknowledgment of releasing some of the parental power to the child or reversal of roles. Regardless of this, the relationship between the parent and children was not harmed but actually enhanced. In some cases, the children take time out to teach their parents and family members local languages. These might seem like significant moments for power to be negotiated and the child to ascertain their power but from the research, it is poignant that moments like these, as frequent as they are, become bonding moments for the family and are recalled as moments that served to bring the families together. Nyasha Dadirai (38) sums this up by saying:

As for me it was positive for my relationship with my child, because, I knew that when she starts to go to school, she won't have problems with other kids, she know,

she already knows how to greet, she will tell me this and that…I could feel happy that at least I am learning something from my child, her going to school, then school, I am learning, so I think I learn quite a lot from her, coz she could come with ahhh languages, even Sotho, she would just speak and I would ask her what does this mean ((Laughs)) and she would tell, and you would see that ahhh of course it's exactly what these people are speaking and the same language.

It is evident in the above extract that the release of power by the parent to the child in the learning process is remembered with nostalgic laughter and excitement that is attached to learning a new language more than the negative feelings of embarrassment, frustration, or anxiety. The parent is comfortable enough to release some of the power to the child and learn from them and this does not seem to shift the roles in any way but rather creates fond memories of togetherness. This blends in with literature highlighting that the release of power by the parents is necessary for the survival of the family and this actually occurs as an acculturation strategy that is beneficial to the family (See Weisskirch, 2010; Berry, 2007). This forms the focus of the subsequent sub-theme.

4.4.1 Acculturation and contrived identities (being relevant for the space)

One of the ways that parents may hand over power to children who serve as brokers is through the acculturation process as they try to learn more about the language from the child who in the usual hierarchy is the one learning from the parent. According to the literature, the needs of acculturation and survival may require parents to become innovative and more flexible about family structures in order to guarantee success for the family (Weisskirch,

2010). In this research, children played a pivotal role in the family as they were the main sources of acculturation for both the parents and the family in general. The safety of the home was used as a place to teach parents and siblings about the South African cultures and language as some of the children narrate:

> *So when I got home, I said "Dad, what were you trying to say to my teacher?" And he is not that type of a person who, you know, accepts to take correction, or to be corrected, if you correct him, ah ah, the whole day. He will say "heeee don't correct me what, what, what" so for you to finish the story just keep quiet, whatever he says haaaa that's it.*

Resistance to English, xenophobic attitudes and dehumanization among other elements in South African contexts are some of the elements necessitating language brokering. Children, through their service as brokers manage to lessen the tension perceived by parents and adults alike incapable of speaking local languages. This suggested transition is done through the process of acculturation provided by brokers in families through teaching the host language and culture to family members. There seems to be traceable track of acculturation running from the school and play setting and then to the family. Children seem to learn local languages faster through their interaction at school and play through friends and then they will pass this on to family members. The subsequent excerpts illustrate this:

> **Nonku Dijam (21)**: *Okay, so what happened was ahhhh I'm very bubbly person, I love to talk, so there was 2 other girls who loved talking and laughing, that's how we got together and one of them was Tswana and the other was Zulu speaking, so when we got together, we got together speaking English, coz they would crack at my jokes, they would laugh at my English jokes and they are the only people that would get them… And my sarcasm, that's how we got along and then eventually my Tswana…*

Nkensani was Tswana, yah she was Tswana, she taught me how to speak Tswana and eventually then Zulu with Zama yah then after I became friends with them, I learnt a lot of things, I learnt Zulu, I learnt to speak Setswana and they would laugh at me all the time but it was helping coz then I would understand.

The research reveals the importance of languages as determined and prescribed by the space in which one lives. Most participants viewed their homes as a 'safe haven' and the best place where they could be themselves and speak the language they are most comfortable with speaking "being at home" where one feels a sense of belonging. This, however, changes the moment they step out of the house. For both parents and children, this brings a need for a broker (for the parent) and the child, this defines the moment to 'put on the mask' of the languages that 'protect' them from being noticed as immigrants. In other words, the circle of belonging is very small, fairly private and restricted to the house and not the wider community. Richard Kure (15) sums this up by saying:

When I am at home, if I am at home, let's say my mother doesn't like to speak in Shona, she will speak Zulu, you heard her now she was calling me, she was speaking in Zulu, so yah I speak Zulu with my mother, with my sisters it's either Zulu or Shona but my father it's Shona, my uncle it's Shona and also my aunty that I said she is a Xhosa, I also speak Xhosa with her, the moment I step out of that gate I change my language!.. I change my language, it's either if the person greeted me in Shona from that direction, I don't answer I just (nod my head) and I keep on walking… That's why I said when I get out of that gate, I change my language, I don't speak Shona, it's either when you come to me and you say do you speak Shona, I say please lower your voice."

The extract above shows the intentional and conscious act by the child to mask his original identity as this might place him at risk of being discriminated, against or worse, xenophobic attack. As soon as the child leaves the house which is the 'safe haven', he hides his Shona identity and pretends to be one with the locals, something he manages to do because he can 'wear the mask' of speaking Zulu or other vernaculars. The home language of immigrant children has become to them a symbol of danger and they try as much as possible to detach themselves from this as it could be the basis of getting attacked in different spaces (See Kupe, Verryn, & Worby, 2008). The repeated attempts to hide their identity not only proves that language brokers 'shield' themselves with language as they can switch and fit into the context in which they exist at that moment but also serves as an affirmation of the expected ill-treatment when a child is recognized as Zimbabwean or Shona speaking. This leads to a conscious effort by the children to fit into the identity of the context they exist in and one of the ways for them to fake their identity is through language. Nosi Tinashe (18) explains how she identifies herself as South African and not Zimbabwean:

> *I identify myself as a South African, because even like the culture, I see myself that somehow I have changed, my culture like some of the culture changes in me, like even some of the dressing, I'm copying some of the dressing, I am no-longer Zimbabwean culture I am more interested into these South African things so that when I am moving around they cannot see that I am a South African or a Zimbabwean. So I am just copying into their, into their culture and stuff.*

The contrived identity in this scenario is verbalised by the participant who accepts that as she moves around in space, she needs to purposely hide her identity as much as possible and this she does by adopting as much of the South African culture as possible while distancing herself from the Zimbabwean culture which seems to lead to attacks. Apart from this however, this also provides children serving as brokers with an identity of their own that

they have embraced through acquiring a new local language. These children are active participants in this regard and therefore view this addition as an enhancement of the self. Multilingual skills that the children possess also give them access into many spaces not just linguistically but also culturally, providing acceptance as they can blend in. They recognise the rejection brought about by their home language or the use of the colonial language, English and deliberately themselves also begin to reject these languages and their connotations. As Nosi Tinashe (18) highlights:

> *"There are some other places that you can't speak English coz if you speak English they will hate you. You can see even the way they look at you, they are not happy, they are not happy with the language because if you are speaking, some they even ignore you."*

In attempting to 'mask' their identity and perfectly blend into spaces they exist, children serving as brokers also use the politics of language to their aid. Rules that govern language are important for acceptance (See Kamwangamalu, 2003). Speaking the language alone is not enough but also abiding to the slang and colloquial rules of that space grants brokers acceptance into circles. In these circles, proper English is again reprimanded as it is associated with snobbish or being a 'coconut' (See Kamwangamalu, 2003). Nonku Dijam (21) was not accepted at first as she only spoke proper English:

> *You would find it's not only girls who bully, but also guys, they be like, "Why do you speak English." I think half my High School life I had to explain to people why I speak English, "Why do you speak English? Is your dad coloured? And why do you have an Indian dot on your forehead? Are you sure you are not Indian?" "No I'm not" "Are you black?" "Which black are you?" "You don't even look Zulu" Maybe "You don't even sound Tswana".*

For Nonku (21), the rejection and bad experiences associated with being considered snobbish or a 'coconut' were only transformed by her adaptation as she started to learn local languages but above this, being further able to apply the colloquial rules that govern English and Zulu in that circle:

> *When I learnt 'tsotsi tal' I could get back at them like, "Hai wena uyangijwayela khabi" that typa thing then Lord I pray he doesn't follow me or I'm gonna freak out ((Laughs))… It helped because, tsotsi tal is a mixture of I think, I think it's a mixture of broken English and Zulu. So when I was learning, it would make it easier, coz they would think, "Ahhhh, she is such a snob trying to act all gangster." And tsotsi tal comes from the gangster side, so they will be like, "She so snobbish but she is trying to act all strong, and she so chilling." So it was a cover up for a lot of things for me. So you would find in a scenario that I was probably scared, then I'd go on that 'tsotsi tal' vibe, wana be gangster, reckless and crazy while speaking English too, and broken English at it. And, it helped because I learnt few words, I learnt few tricks then I learnt isiZulu kahle then I learnt other languages, so it was like "Ahhhh mos, you can speak such? We don't even know you can do such coz we think wena ui cheese gal (eloquent in English and acts white)" and I'm like "Yeah whatever."*

In this space, it seems that 'broken English' mixed with some vernacular has been able to create a colloquial language with rules governed by the users of that specific language. It seems that speaking improper English is acting against the perceived 'linguistic genocide' as this in a way takes away the power and the arrogance associated with the English language, making it 'their own' language by mixing it with vernacular. This seems not only to take away the 'power' and 'arrogance' of the English language with its history in South Africa but also makes local languages regain their 'power' and determine the rules of language. In the case of Nonku (21), the politics of language, also functions to create and

maintain boundaries of who belongs and who does not. In this regard, the more language ability you possess and the more you distance oneself from the English language and 'dilute' it with local languages, the more you are bound to be an accepted member of that space. Trans-languaging therefore has power in this space (See Kamwangamalu, 2003). The idea of 'whiteness' seems to be one of the elements that is most resisted in blacks by other blacks in South Africa. From the above, it seems that proper use of English in blacks is perceived as suggestive of superiority, high class or 'whiteness'. Taking control of the language, therefore, and restructuring the rules of English becomes a way of 'stripping down' the connotations of 'whiteness' in the language and appropriating it. This, however, may not help to lessen racist behaviours and dehumanization against black migrants who depend on English and speak it in more conventional ways.

With the responsibility shouldered by the child serving as a broker through the acculturation process, it is debated as shown in literature how this power-shift impacts the family dynamics, specifically parent-child hierarchies. Berry (2007) among other authors in the review has highlighted how debate has centred on 'parentification' of the child and if this has positive or negative impacts on the child in question. Apart from this, a child serving as a broker has been viewed as having a positive bearing on family dynamics as this is seen as important for the acculturation of both the individual and the family in general (Berry, 2007).

4.4.2 Parentification

In this research, it is poignant that children serving as brokers in many cases step in the role of being the 'parental figure' for their parents as they mediate for them in various spaces and also 'shield' them with their language skills as highlighted in the sections above. Upon giving a narrative of an experience, one of the children Nosi Tinashe (18), stated that:

> *"My mother wanted to ask where we get the…where is the, we were looking for Bree taxi rank, yah. So the thing is that we were suppose ask where is that taxi rank, so my mother didn't know how to ask in Zulu, so she knows, she knows that if she tries to speak in English, it's difficult and some of the people, they don't like that, they will hate you because they think maybe that, you see yourself that maybe you are better than them, so she, she said that, "Can you ask in Zulu?" Then I ask to another guy in Zulu where I can get the Bree taxi rank, I asked in Zulu so I helped my mother for that. So I noticed that every time when my mother would want to visit, she has to go…. I have to go with her and help her with some languages because she was scared of speaking Zulu and stuff."*

This account by Nosi (18) resonates with the assertion that children serving as brokers step into the role usually reserved for their parents and mediate for their parent, a typical phenomenon according Winton (2003). In the eyes of the parent, the traditional parental role is withdrawn on the basis that they cannot communicate in the local language and on the same account, the child is 'promoted' to the role of the 'adult' to speak for her mother. This 'adultification' and 'parentification' has a definite impact on the roles when the child serves as a broker and in this regard, the parent notes that some of the power has shifted to the child and therefore might feel somehow 'infantilized'. However, the question that arises from such

data therefore is if the impact of these roles being reversed has a bearing on the hierarchy and dynamics in the family.

Weisskirch (2010) asserts that "pathology of parentification is in the eyes of the beholder" supporting the notion that family hierarchies may actually remain intact. This research provides further support for this view as all families in the research maintained a functional hierarchy that did not substantially deviate from the hierarchy of the heritage culture. While changes in authoritarian family structures may indeed be desirable, the empirical evidence seems to suggest that in these families the fluidity of roles necessitated by language brokering, doesn't entirely alter more traditional family roles in other contexts, for example, in the home. The child's greater authority in public spaces rather seem to inscribe a mutual respect between parents and children, strengthening family bonds. Danai Panashe (34), one of the children highlights how the mother maintained parental control even though the child consistently served as a broker:

> *"I was staying with my mum, so, my mum had those ground rules that were laid, to say, you know what? You are my child, so this is what I taught you and this is what you are going to stick to."*

This statement in many ways serves to confirm that the parental control or hierarchies are maintained in the home, although in some cases, for the function and survival of the family in a foreign context, the parent 'hands-over' to the child some control. This resonates with the literature which stipulates the importance of the flexibility of the parent in switching hierarchies for the survival of the family through acculturation (Weisskirch, 2010). It deserves to be mentioned that the feelings are mixed however as, according to the parent, the hierarchy has been tampered with as a necessary measure but none-the-less, the parent would rather be 'shielded by the child than be exposed to dehumanization having maintained control

with no language skills. This ability by the parent to be flexible is important and guarantees the survival of the family.

Although there seems to be concern that arises from the child playing the role of the adult, parents seem to understand that it is a necessary part of the family functionality hence they hand over the required power to the child but the family still has knowledge of the hierarchy that exists in the family.

4.5 Language brokering and xenophobia

It seems, from the data obtained that a consistent concern for migrant parents and children alike is xenophobic attacks. It is clear that the ability to speak a language is more than just communicatively functional, it importantly provides a 'shield' that can protect immigrants from being embarrassed or worse, attacked. From the data, the risk for xenophobia is an apparent and daily reality for Zimbabweans and in the subsequent sub-themes, I analyse these risks, what necessitates them, while deducing if (and how) language brokering reduces or increases them.

4.5.1 Xenophobic attitudes necessitating language proficiency.

All the participants in the research, in one or many ways, seemed to reflect a fear of speaking English or either their own language amongst themselves in South African spaces. This fear seems to be perpetuated by either memory or some form of heuristic association between xenophobic events of 2008 and also 2015, to language. For both children and adults in the study, there is an evident fear of being identified and victimised as a foreigner through the use of language that is eventually masked by the adoption of local languages or the aid of

a broker. Dadirai Nyasha (38) narrates these xenophobic attitudes which even stretch to hospitals:

> *I still remember I went with my child, for the injection, for the vaccination, I went there, then I started to speak in English coz I couldn't speak in, speak in Zulu and ehhh when you, they ask you something, they ask you in Zulu and when you answer them in English, showing them that you don't know how to speak their language, they will continue, "heeee you makwerekwere you are problems heee what what what what."*

It is important to point out that in South Africa, dynamics around language also revolve around a colonial history of dominance, power and class positions, all embodied in the English language (Achebe, 2006; Alexander, 2004). This means that even if people (such as the nurses in the hospital that this participant tells us about) can speak English, they are resistant to using the language because of its associations with historical power. The fear of continuous xenophobic attitudes highlighted by Dadirai Nyasha (38) therefore means that people have to distance themselves from English or their home-languages as they are both associated with victimization and in the worst case, attacks. This is the case for children as well, as highlighted by Richard Kure (15) who states the following:

> *Even if I go to school, am playing with my friends I don't speak Shona, even if they speak Shona, you know that when Shona we speak by the corners but if we are at school I speak either Zulu or other languages because I think reputation is very important…*

The continuous experiencing of these xenophobic attitudes in many ways creates a fear of speaking or being associated with languages that are not South African vernacular as these languages are almost always associated or coupled with some force of attack or

resistance of the language. This resistance is in line with attempt to challenge the idea of the 'perceived whiteness' in the black immigrants speaking the English language. It seems plausible that speaking English is attached in South Africa with a perception of dominance or superiority which local people do not want to associate or attach to black people. It is also possible to explain this by the notion of resisting 'linguistic genocide' and the arrogance associated with the historical dominance of English in South Africa which has resulted in English occupying more social and economic spaces than local languages (See Kamwangamalu, 2000 & Achebe, 2006). South African history is closely linked to dominance of the English and Afrikaans languages and these became economic languages and were forced on blacks even in school. In an attempt to salvage their own vernaculars, black South Africans might resist English or Afrikaans in most social domains, especially if these are spoken by another black person.

Language brokering in such spaces functions as a deterrence of the potential resistance. A child's ability to translate or speak for the parent in such situations might ease the resistance or eliminate it totally, as English no longer serves as the main language of communication in this domain. Language brokering, in essence serves to equalise people. Although this might serve as an irony since the child is the one speaking for the parent, it is apparent from the data that this deters resistance even in the presence of the police, who listen to the child more than the parents as illustrated above by Edmore Kure (39), a parent in this research.

4.5.2 Resistance to English

It is imperative to note from the data and from the example above that multilingualism in general and language brokering specifically in the context of South Africa are facets that are beneficial to immigrants. Not only are these survival skills necessitated by the continual

resistance to speaking English by South Africans in preference for their own languages but are also handy skills in a continually globalizing world. The politics of English in South Africa among South Africans is further complicated by the racial nature of the resistance, as it is only blacks who are attacked, dehumanised or embarrassed by other blacks if they use the English language (Nixon, 2001).

In the event of xenophobic attitudes or resistance to English, multilingualism functions as a 'shield' protecting immigrants and warding off any potential attack or rejection of services in spaces like hospitals or shops or other public places. The literature portrays this resistance through the denial of services to those who cannot speak local languages accompanied by adamant persistence in speaking local languages to an individual obviously not understanding the language (see Crush & Towodzera, 2014 and Seroka, 2011). This resistance to speaking English and failure to accommodate immigrants was a theme that continued to rise in the present research. In more ways than one, it seems that English is resisted in varying spaces, necessitating the need for brokers and exposing those immigrants who lack a broker or a translator in such spaces to ridicule, embarrassment, or worse. At the surface level, Edmore Kure (39) reflected that:

> *"I went to another shop ehhhh there were ladies, who were not… didn't want to speak English in fact. I was asking something like to carry the baby, they didn't want to speak in… I was telling them in English and they were not ehhh as if they don't know it in English, but when my child came, he told them in their language and it was very easy for me to get that ehhh baby carry bag".*

There is an obvious and apparent refusal by the local people to accommodate English speakers especially if they are black African and this crosses public spaces. This behaviour symbolic of xenophobic attitudes not only necessitates the need for children to step in and

broker but also exposes adults in the absence of these children. This exposes them to the risk of being attacked or victimized when identified as the foreign Other, not belonging to this space. Takura Brian (38) shows how he as a parent is at a potential risk in the absence of his child:

> *They (the traffic cops) were speaking to me with their language, when I try to speak in English, coz I was… that time I couldn't be able to speak to them in their language, I wasn't learned, I was still using my language and English, so when I trying to speak with them with English .hhhh they were fighting with me about my ehhh about speaking with them with the English, they were saying they are not whites, the only whites are the people you can speak with in English. Ahhhh "You have to learn our language and speak with us with our language". So that was the traffic cop who was telling me ehhh those ehhhh those type ehhh of issues saying I don't have to speak English.*

4.5.3 Risk of not speaking local languages

These politics of language as highlighted above carry with them risk and consequences for those who do not speak local languages. This is one of the factors or elements that were used in 2008 to attack and identify foreigners (See Kupe, Verryn, & Worby, 2008). The politics of language and the boundaries of belonging and not belonging that are created define who belongs (See Yuval-Davies, 2006), and whoever does not belong is at risk, unless protected by a 'broker'. The 'racial arrogance' of English in the history of Africa as suggested Chinua Achebe (see 2006 p.7) seems to result in defences cutting across social life especially among the black South Africans which express themselves in xenophobic behaviours or some form of rejection of the humanity of foreigners, all of which place immigrants at risk whether in regards to negative treatment, prejudice, actual

discrimination or some form of subtle lack of acceptance. Charity Takura (19) and Brian Takura (38) both give narratives of being reprimanded for speaking English as the local people including the police said:

> *...here we are not white people, you must speak in our language, why you want to speak with (English), it's not your language, it's the white people language, then eish*

Besides not being able to accommodate English, the refusal to speak English carries with it strong resistance of any signifier of 'whiteness' in blacks. Being fluent and eloquent in English seems to be a strong signifier for this undesired 'whiteness' and initiates some racial attack to blacks especially in school with words like 'snob' and 'coconut' being utilised to ostracise these children. This elicits the need for the child serving as a broker to mediate in place of the parent or other children who have less capacity for the language in different spaces and scenarios. The presence of a broker who is ready to jump in and mediate and translate for the adult lessens the risk in these situations. In the same light, Nonku Dijam (21) jumped to the rescue of her sister who was denied housing when the landlord realized that she was speaking in English and not South African vernacular:

> *Recently when we were house hunting, we called this guy, I think he is the caretaker of the place we are staying in currently. So we call him and my sister is snobbish as well, so she speaks English. So my sister calls this guy and told this guys, "Hi, we saw this room on the internet yada, yada, yaha, yadah, yada" and this guy says, "No, there is no rooms available" and we are like, we need that place coz we went there, we went to view the place and we were told there are rooms available, so when we got home, we call this guy and this guy says "no, there no rooms available". I'm like, let me call this person, I call him and like I saw his name is Gontse I'm like haaaa. I call him, I'm like "Hi Gontse ke batla plek, we saw ple so, so, so so" (Hi Gontse we want*

a place, we saw a place so, so, so), then he said, "When do you guys wana view the place? It's gonna be available in like an hour or so"

5. CONCLUSION

The study was set out to investigate the plight of migrant families in South Africa, specifically Zimbabwean families who have children who serve as language brokers for family members and other family members in varying spaces in the country. On the assumption that the service of brokering is existent in South Africa, the study also looked to determine the conditions that necessitate brokering and the impact of this service on the family members and the in general and relational aspects which include feelings, family dynamics and the influence of language brokering on parental roles. In summing these up, the study aimed to answer these 3 questions:

1. What language brokering services children are performing for their parents and families, which spaces do they serve in and how these experiences affect them?
2. How do children serving as brokering impact on the family and the family dynamics and traditional family roles?
3. In what ways might children acting as language brokers for their parents mediate (increase, decrease, or a bit of both) potential xenophobic experiences?

The plight of foreigners in South Africa and Zimbabweans in particular has been silent in research in this context. The literature and this research are consistent in the assertion that although language brokering and experiences of migrant children and families have not been investigated much in South Africa, there is an evident gap that needs to be filled. Although trends, patterns, and figures of migration have been the focus of research, the experiences of migrant children and their families have been largely neglected. Subjects that have been turned back on are central to the plight of migrant families in South Africa,

considering the recurrent xenophobic attacks, on a large scale (mainly 2008 and 2015) and also on a subtle but daily basis of their lives.

5.2 Findings

5.2.1 Language Brokering and spaces

The literature available from other contexts where brokering has been studied before highlights contestation and debates with regards to children serving as brokers in more formal spaces, with legal legislation attempting to deter them from these services mainly in medical spaces (Morales & Hanson, 2005). In the South African context, the research managed to gather that brokering is a service that is frequently practiced by migrant children in multiple spaces including taxis, medical spaces and schools. In all these spaces, children serve frequently but rarely serve in the formal capacity as official translators or mediators. It is important to note though that this research found that children still serve in formal spaces in an informal capacity, brokering for parents and family members alike. Formal spaces which include medical spaces, spaces, road-blocks and schools were explored. In all these spaces, English was somehow resisted and any signifier of 'whiteness' in blacks was strongly reprimanded by other blacks with service being withheld in other formal spaces.

However, this was not the case in informal spaces where migrants had conscious knowledge that any use of English was strongly penalised by dehumanizing labels and although services may continue to be provided (for example in taxis), behaviour or speech resembling 'whiteness' was strongly sanctioned. Resistance to migrants which is common in many countries may be concealed where there is a real language barrier that prevents understanding, however in the South African context where communication is often possible in the third language of English and yet is actively refused, the exclusion of migrants is explicit. This resonates with the research by Hungwe & Gelderblom (2014) who state that some spaces in South Africa function to identify who belongs and who does not, while in the

same process excluding those who do not belong. Language in many spaces has frequently been used in South Africa to perpetuate this social exclusion. Schools, medical spaces, and taxis seem to be the most salient spaces of social exclusion where language is used as a marker of identity, allowing access to those articulate in the local language, and creating a boundary to exclude those not articulate in South African vernaculars. Transitioning between them necessitates two elements discovered by this research. The first element is the need for a language broker, represented by children who learn these languages faster than their parents (Cline, 2014). Parents and family members who need to access these spaces and transition them daily are aware of language being used to exclude them daily, and this necessitates and increases the dependency of these parents and family members on the multilingual children.

Secondly, the research found that social exclusion in these spaces and the 'boundary maintenance' embodied in excluding English and Shona speakers has resulted in many migrant children hiding their original identity and adopting the South African identity that 'masks' their original identity and keeps them safe from any form of attack potentially arising from their original identity. With regards to spaces, the above attitudes and exclusion has also confined migrants to their homes as 'safe havens' where they can be liberated in terms of speaking any language and restricted once they step out of their places of residence.

5.2.2 Impact of language brokering on family dynamics and feelings towards brokering.

The language brokers I interviewed mentioned how successful they are in protecting both themselves by 'adopting' a concealed identity and also protect their family members and parents by speaking for them in spaces where they could potentially be attacked in their absence. Consistent with this, Morales & Hanson (2005) indicate how migrant children who serve as brokers can be viewed as 'shields' for their parents and family members by speaking

on their behalf. This is particularly pertinent in the South African context, where multilingual migrant children aid their parents and family members by speaking for them in various spaces. Important to this is the shift in dynamics as the child, usually the one being protected by the parents, acts the 'shield', protecting the parents in various spaces. In the absence of these children, parents and family members run the risk of being excluded or worse being attacked. The dependency of the parents on the migrant child serves as further evidence that the child serves as a 'shield' for the parents, which many parents reiterated that they always have to 'carry around with them' to be protected.

The powerful position of children serving as brokers as they translate and mediate for their parents was also investigated in this project and it became clear that in line with the literature (e.g. Love, 2007), embarrassment was a feeling that characterised the participants in this research. Both parents and children mentioned the feeling of embarrassment, however, it was only the parents who felt that this embarrassment might affect the power dynamics of the family. The parents worried that brokering in public was a source of embarrassment that undermined their parenthood or adult roles, humiliating them in the eyes of their children. On the contrary, although children are sometimes embarrassed by their parents' inability to speak English and communicate, this does not seem to extend to undermine other feelings of love and respect that they feel for their parents. It is evident that the power-shift in brokering affects the parents more and has a lesser impact on the children, who still consider themselves under the guidance of their parents, and focused on teaching the parents and family members local languages needed for their survival in the South African context. This temporary shift aids in the assertiveness of the child and is necessary for the survival of the family in a foreign context. This research project provides evidence for the assertion that a temporary shift in parent-child roles does compromise traditional values or undermine parental roles.

The need to teach parents local languages and 'equip' them to protect themselves has close ties to the parents' ability to be flexible enough to let go of some of the power to their children as this allows survival and functionality of the family as a whole. This resonates with theories highlighting how language brokering can be viewed as an acculturation strategy enabling families to survive in multilingual spaces (Weisskirch, 2010; Berry, 2007). Although acculturation is a needed and very essential part of migrant families in multilingual contexts, some researchers assert that this release of power by the parents results in 'adultification' of the child and 'infantilization' of the parent, elements encapsulated in the phenomenon of 'parentification'. From the children I interviewed, it is plausible to state that stepping in the parental role while brokering, in no way impacts negatively on the traditional hierarchies that already have been established in the family. The children still take guidance from their parents and added to this, the dictates and lifestyle templates provided by the parents are still followed. The parents still maintain the leadership roles over the children, their decisions, and lifestyle. 'Parentification', from the research has no visible negative impacts, but rather is an existent and functional part of the family dynamics. This way of life is functionally adapted to and in contrast to some of the literature, promotes closer family relationships and bonds.

Although language brokering can largely be viewed as positive aspect, warding off attacks, acculturating the family and not interrupting with family dynamics, it is evident from this research that serving as a broker fosters feelings in the child that can be viewed as negative. In line with the available literature, children sometimes feel burdened while they broker for their parents. Some children I interviewed stated that their personal time is strained as they have to cater to the needs of the parents. The time dedicated to brokering may be stretched to involve travelling with the child, which in some of the cases resulted in the children being absent from school. Language brokers seem to be consistent 'travelling

companions' for their parents for convenience and this is stated by the children and echoed by the parents. This is one of the factors evoking negative emotions in the children, describing the service as a 'bore' which always keeps them with their parents and placing them in scary and potentially dangerous situations at times. These feelings of boredom and fear are coupled with a sense of the threat perceived in the spaces where children translate which arises with negative feelings associated with one's original Zimbabwean identity.

Despite these negative feelings, positive feelings seem to outweigh the negative ones. Both literature and this research are consistent with the assertion that both parents and children feel a sense of pride in the broker. Parents are proud of the fact that their children are forging through a foreign environment and continue to learn and teach the whole family the new languages. For the children, the sense of pride seems to rise from the knowledge that they have mastered the environment and language to the point that they can be included and mask themselves as people who belong to the context. They also seem to be proud that they can protect and serve their family members with the skills they have attained. In addition to reducing the risk of being attacked, this mastery for the children also serves to increase their self-confidence as they engage with the external world.

Apart from this, serving as a broker in different contexts also seems to reflect on well-being of the children as they verbalise that they are actually happy to serve as brokers for the many elders in need of their services. This sense of happiness was highlighted by both parents and children, regardless of being exposed to the threatening environments the children sometimes serve in.

These positive feelings are reaffirmed by the positive relationships fostered by brokering within the families I interviewed. All family members asserted that their relationships have been developed as a result of the service. Regardless of embarrassment and

other negative feelings highlighted above, the participants actually verbalised that they were closer to each other as a result of brokering by the children.

5.2.3 Language brokering and xenophobia

One of the unique elements of this research created by the South African context was the explicit link between language and xenophobia. Language brokering serves not only a communicative function but is, in a large way necessitated by the need to avoid xenophobic attitudes in daily interactions and the threat of attacks. As parents move in public spaces, the xenophobic attitudes they encounter has necessitated the need for them to travel with their children who broker for them. This confirms two important elements of this research in relation to xenophobia: firstly, this is a confirmation that children who serve as language brokers are effective in 'shielding' their parents against xenophobic attacks. Language brokers in essence can be viewed as playing a major role in giving a sense of security to their parents and in some cases peer at school. This is confirmed by the reliance parents have on them and also the comfort they feel in their presence.

Secondly, this also confirms that language brokering has an impact on xenophobia, in the presence of a minor who brokers for the parent, while xenophobic attitudes may persist, the potential for attacks may decrease. No parent in the research mentioned that they were ever attacked in the presence of their child or when their child is mediating, while they have experienced attacks alone in the absence of their children. The presence of the children alleviates these threats, possibly simply because children may curb excessive violence in some perpetrators, or possibly directly because of the linguistic meditation they provide. It is also plausible to assert that functioning as a broker does not place the child in any danger. None of the participants in the research were attacked while they were mediating or translating for other people. Rather, there were actually positive responses to the service, even when the police were involved or when other services needed to be provided such as in

medical contexts. There seems to be more risk for English speakers who are not only refused service but are also, in some cases, attacked.

5.3 Limitations

The criteria applied in the current research to select participants was a factor that limited not only the number of people that could get involved in the project but also capped the variety of migrant population that could be accessed. The research specifically looked at narratives of Zimbabwean immigrants; this meant that the lives and narratives of other nationalities like Congolese with other languages that are not English were not the focus of this project. These populations can create the focus of future research as their challenges in this context differ from those faced by Zimbabweans. Apart from the population, the study also faced the limitation of matching the parents with their children with regards to the criteria. In some cases, children who broker had Ndebele parents, which immediately made them not to fit the criteria. This therefore meant that a lot of stories were lost in the sampling process and these might have informed the research or added value to the current findings.

5.4 Recommendations

This research has managed to expose a gap in the research of migrant family experiences in general and specifically, migrant children and their experiences. Apart from this, the importance of language in South Africa and the occurrence of language brokering have been made salient. Future research is needed for the above aspects they are both under-studied and important facets of society in the South African context. With the migration patterns of other African citizens settling in South Africa, it is important to investigate the plight of these migrants. A line of inquiry essential to this is communication for French speaking nationals who need brokering on the level of English as the dominant language and local vernacular everywhere they are on a formal and informal basis. Daily and subtle

xenophobic attitudes have been highlighted by the research as recurrent in South Africa and have been made salient in spaces like schools.

Further research needs to investigate strategies to make South African communities and schools more inclusive, accepting, and less resistant to other languages and specifically English spoken by black African nationals. Xenophobic attitudes need to occupy a place in research as they are a recurring aspect of society which is 'hidden under the carpet' unless there are attacks exemplified by the 2008 and 2015 attacks and a reality to almost everyone staying in Johannesburg who migrated locally or internationally. Research needs to investigate this phenomenon as it is a daily struggle for migrant families which is a reality faced daily but only highlighted when these attacks spread across the nation and turn more violent.

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Appendix A: Participation Sheet

Appendix B: Ethical Clearance

Appendix C: Information Sheet

Appendix D: Consent Form

Appendix E: Assent Form

Appendix F: Consent Form (Parent for Child)